

THE  
BABBLER.

CONSISTING OF  
ORIGINAL ESSAYS,

ON THE  
Most INTERESTING and FAMILIAR  
TOPICS.

In which are represented some striking PICTURES  
of MODERN LIFE and MANNERS.

CALCULATED  
To enlarge the MIND, and improve the TASTE.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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The THIRD EDITION.

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DUBLIN:

Printed for J. POTTS, and W. COLLES,  
BOOKSELLERS, in *Dame-street*.



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# ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Piece may be considered as a proper Supplement to those elegant Works, the Spectator, Guardian, Tatler, Rambler, Idler, Connoisseur, and Adventurer, being written on the same Plan, and with the same generous Design. A Vein of Morality, tingured with the purest Wit, runs through the whole; and he who can peruse it without being edified and entertained, must have very little Judgment, and still less Taste. The Name of the Author alone (a Name held sacred in the Republic of Letters!) would sufficiently recommend this ingenious Performance; but as he has declined publicly owning it, for Reasons that will evidently appear to the attentive Reader, the Editors of this Dublin Edition do not think themselves warranted to disclose what himself has been so industrious to conceal.

P R E F A C E.

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THE  
BABBLER.

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NUMB. LXVI. *Saturday, May 1.*

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✻✻✻ HERE never has been a period in  
✻ T ✻ which greater pretensions were made  
✻ ✻ to patriotism, than in the present,  
✻✻✻ though perhaps there never was a  
period in which public spirit was so  
utterly disregarded. Every man we meet has  
something to say about the sufferings of his un-  
fortunate country, though at that very moment  
he is doing every thing in his power to prejudice  
this unfortunate country himself. In the course  
of my acquaintance I have known a man exclaim  
against luxury, who could not make a dinner with-  
out twelve or fourteen dishes; and have heard a  
woman of fashion commiserating the case of our  
distressed manufactures, with the very same  
breath that gave orders for the purchase of a

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French



French silk, a set of Dresden dishes, or an Indian cabinet. Contradiction is the prevailing foible of the present age; and in nothing are we more unaccountable, than in our eternal pretensions to consistency.

The most whimsical patriot, however, whom I have met with, is Ned Scamper. This extraordinary character has studied the celebrated fable of the bees with the closest attention, and puts down every vice or folly which he commits to the good of his country. If he gets intoxicated, it is from a spirit of genuine patriotism. The national revenue is benefited in proportion to the quantity he consumes: and if he breaks the head of an unfortunate waiter, that's another instance of public spirit. The money which he gives to make the affair up, circulates through the community, and is a cause of satisfaction to a thousand families. In short, Ned has drank, wenched, fought, and beggared himself, through an exalted solicitude for the general emolument, and is now close pent up in one of our prisons, out of a pure and disinterested regard for the welfare of society.

Yet notwithstanding the little claim which the generality of this kingdom can really have to the character of patriotism, it must nevertheless, be acknowledged, that we have some people, who in opposition to the torrent of fashionable folly, consume scarcely any thing but the produce of their own country. To be sure these people cut but a very moderate figure in life; they seldom rise beyond the level of oyster women, common soldiers, hackney coachmen, or bricklayers labourers: but what then, both their beer and their gin are manufactured within the weekly

weekly bills; and if their tobacco is not the immediate growth of Great Britain, it is at least sent us from some of the British plantations. Nay their very oaths are entirely of English materials—no *'pon my honours*—or *let me dies*, and such like despicable exclamations of foreign contexture; but a solid *b—t my l—s*, like a humming tankard of *Calvert's entire butt*, strikes us at once with admiration, and gives an equal proof both of their public spirit and understanding.

It is remarkable, that though these people are the best friends to the real interest of their country, they nevertheless give themselves no airs of importance, nor run into any insolent self-sufficiencies about their attachment to the good of the kingdom. On the contrary, they leave every arrogance of this nature to their superiors, who act upon principles diametrically opposite; from which we may naturally infer, that those are always the truest patriots who make the least demands upon our gratitude for praise; and who pursue the indeviabable path of national welfare, without looking upon themselves as entitled to any extraordinary merit from the steadiness of their course. It is also worthy of observation, that the lower the situation of the British Plebeian, the more inflexibly rivetted we find him to the good of his country; the more we see him wedded to his gin and tobacco; while on the contrary, the higher we go among consequence and coronets, the higher encouragement we shall find given to every thing of a foreign manufacture, and the higher we shall find the nostril of contempt turned up at the produce of poor old England.

It may possibly be observed on this occasion, that notwithstanding this great superiority which I give the lowest ranks over the very first; yet if an enquiry was made into the principles of each, both might appear to bear a nearer similitude at bottom, than at present I seem inclinable to allow. It may possibly be urged, that if the poorest orders of the people were able to furnish themselves with the luxuries of life, they would run into just the same excesses for which they are continually railing at their betters; and manifest as little regard for the welfare of their country, as the most fashionable man of quality in the kingdom. Why, in fact, I believe they would; but this proves nothing more, than that, with all our patriotic boasting, we have not a single spark of public spirit existing amongst us as a nation; and that with all our ridiculous parade of free-born Englishmen, we are the veriest slaves in the universe to the worst of tyrants—vice and affectation.

The only way to recover our liberty from the oppressive fangs of such arbitrary rulers, is to make a proper use of our understanding.—We do not want either spirit or good sense; yet through some unaccountable impulse, we act as if utterly destitute of both.—We can ridicule our follies, and be ashamed of our vices, yet never make the least effort to get the better of either; and there is scarcely a road to virtue but what we have the justice to admire, at the very instant we are giving the most unbounded loose to licentiousness and immorality. With regard, however, to actions of a public kind, there is a patriotism of the most exalted nature, with which we have hitherto appeared totally unacquainted, notwithstanding



notwithstanding it is of infinitely greater importance than the encouragement of commerce or manufactures. This patriotism is the practice of moral rectitude, and the desire of setting a good example to our neighbours. Now-a-days, if a legislature delivers a popular harangue in either house of parliament, we set him down as the *deliciae humani generis*; and upon the mere strength of this single qualification, give him an indubitable privilege to trample upon every law both of reason and morality. If he exerts himself in a strenuous opposition to Government, we are regardless how many worthy tradesmen he breaks by his dishonesty, and laugh at a violation of our wife and our daughters, where the ruffian happens to profess a real regard for the interest of his country. By this means we reconcile the whitest virtue with the most opposite vice; and imagine it possible, that a man can have the highest veneration imaginable for our rights and liberties, when he is bursting through the most sacred of them all.

Let us, however, be assured, that a bad man never made a real patriot. He that is insensible of what he owes to his Deity and to himself, can never be conscious of what is due to his country. The foundation of all public excellence is in private virtue; and where we find that wanting, though a combination of some peculiar circumstances may engage a great personage to support the interest of his country, we may rest assured, that he is actuated by motives very different to the principles of patriotism; and that he only makes use of the fascinating sound to cloak the purposes of disappointed pride, and secret resentment. Where a man truly loves his country, he



is tender of its minutest laws, and pays an equal regard to the morals, as he does to the temporal interests, of the public.

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NUMB. LXVII. *Saturday, May 8.*

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**T**HOUGH I have more than once condemned the practice of toasting as a custom diametrically opposite to every principle both of reason and politeness, there is, however, one species of it which has yet escaped my animadversion, though perhaps none of the least culpable: I intend therefore to make it the subject of my present discussion, and flatter myself that it will prove no way disagreeable to my readers.

When the fashion of toasting was first of all instituted, is by no means a necessary object of enquiry; but had it been judiciously confined to the limits of a tavern, and kept sacred for the purposes of midnight riot, it would be infinitely less entitled to our censure and contempt. The wild and giddy headed hour of extravagance might probably palliate a casual gust of folly and licentiousness; but when in open violation of all the dictates of decency, it is carried into private families, the least extenuation becomes utterly impossible, and indignation is at a loss whether most to condemn the ignorance or the brutality of the proceeding.

It is a just observation of a very celebrated author, that in proportion as every country is barbarous, it is addicted to inebriety. Were the people of England to be judged of by this standard,

dard, it is much to be feared, that our national character would be none of the most amiable. Notwithstanding few people can lay down better rules for behaviour than ourselves, there are none more unaccountably preposterous in their conduct: when we visit at one anothers houses, and propose to pass a few hours in an agreeable manner, how absurdly do we set out: instead of endeavouring to enjoy what Mr. Pope finely calls

*The feast of reason and the flow of soul,*

we think every entertainment insipid till reason is totally banished out of company; and imagine, through some monstrous depravity of inclination, that a social emanation of soul is never to be obtained, but where politeness and propriety are apparently sacrificed, and the roar of underbred excess circulated round the room at the expence both of sense and morality.

To the indeliable disgrace of this country, there is scarcely a vice or a folly of our neighbours, but what we sedulously copy, at the very moment we affect to mention the people whose manners we thus ridiculously imbibe, with the most insuperable disregard. Their good qualities are in fact the only things which we scorn to adopt, as if it was a derogation either from our spirit or our understanding to owe a single instance of prudence or virtue to the force of example. France in particular has kindly supplied us with an abundance of follies; but there is not, to my recollection, any one circumstance wherein she has given the smallest improvement to our understandings: not that France is destitute in sense, or deficient in virtue: it is we who want the wisdom of imitating her where

she is really praise worthy; and are infatuated to the lamentable degree of neglecting those actions which we ought to pursue with our highest admiration, to follow those which ought to be the objects of our highest aversion and contempt.

In the present case, I mean their convivial entertainments, the French are particularly sensible and well-bred; they are all vivacity without running into the least indelicacy; and can keep up the necessary life of a social meeting, without borrowing the smallest assistance from immorality. In the most elevated flow of spirits they never think of sending the women out of company, merely to give an unbounded loose to ribaldry and licentiousness. On the contrary, they estimate the pleasure of the entertainment by the number of the ladies; and look upon an evening to be most wretchedly trifled away, where a party of men make an appointment for a tavern. Thus their politeness prevents them from deviating either into folly or vice; and in the most intimate intercourse of families, nothing scarcely ever passes but a round of sensible freedom and unconstrained civility.

With us, however, the case is widely different; if half a dozen friends meet at the house of a valuable acquaintance, instead of treating his wife, his sister, or his daughter, with a proper degree of respect, we all manifest an absolute disinclination for their company. The instant the cloth is taken away we expect they shall retire, and look upon it as a piece of ill-breeding, if they accidentally stay a moment longer than ordinary. And for what are we so impatient to be left to ourselves? Why, for the mighty satisfaction of drinking an obscene toast, and the pleasure of indiscriminately



discriminately filling a bumper to a woman of honour and a strumpet; the friend of our bosom, and a fellow whom we consider perhaps as the greatest scoundrel in the universe.

In a country where the women are so generally remarkable for good sense and delicate vivacity; where they also enjoy in other respects an ample share of liberty, and in a manner regulate the laws of propriety, it is not a little surprising that in the moments of convivial festivity we should treat them with so palpable a contempt. The hour in which we strive to be most happy, one would naturally imagine should be the time in which we ought most earnestly to solicit the favour of their company: but no; it is impossible to make an Englishman happy without allowing him to run into the grossest illiberalities. The conversation of an amiable woman he thinks by no means equal to the roar of a dissolute companion; and it is absolutely necessary to make him *gloriously drunk*, as the fashionable phrase is, before he can reach the envied pinnacle of a *bon vivant* felicity.

The pleasantest excuse which all our choice spirits give for this extraordinary attachment to toasting is, that without a toast, there would be no possibility of finding a sufficient fund of conversation for the company. Why then are the ladies excluded, who could add so agreeably to the conversation? "O, because their presence would be an invincible restraint; we could not say what we please, nor push the toast about;" that is, in plain English, "we could not indulge ourselves in a thousand scandalous excesses, which would disgrace the lowest plebeian of the community: we could neither destroy our constitu-



tion nor our principles; neither give a loose to obscenity, intemperance, and execration; ridicule the laws of our country, nor fly out against the ordinances of our God." Alas, civilized as we think ourselves, is it an impossibility for a nation of savages to be more barbarous or absurd? The general consequence of our convivial meetings is the severest reflexion which they can undergo, for with all our boasted understanding, is it not rather an uncommon circumstance for the most intimate acquaintance to break up without some broil highly prejudicial to their friendship, if not even dangerous to their lives?

To remedy so great and so universal an evil; to rescue our national character from the imputation of barbarism; and to establish some little claim to the reputation of a civilized people, there are but two ways left; these however are both short and effectual ones: to abolish toasting in all taverns; and at all private houses, never to make the ladies withdraw from company. By this means, in the first place, there will be no emulation among giddy-headed young fellows to swallow another bumper; nor any obligation for a man with a weak constitution to drink as hard as a seasoned Fox-hunter: and in the second instance, the meetings at private families by being conducted agreeable to the principles of politeness, will never swerve from the sentiments either of reason or virtue, but be, as they always ought, productive of social mirth and real happiness.

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NUMB. LXVIII. *Saturday, May 15.*

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To the BABLER.

S I R,

**T**HOUGH few people are less inclined than myself to cavil at the reputation of a great writer, yet it is with no little pain that I have often seen the public so much ravished with the *whistling of a name*, as to stamp the very errors of an author with the seal of admiration, and to think it impossible, because he was excellent on some particular subjects, but what he must be equally eminent on all.

I am led insensibly into a reflexion of this nature, from a conversation which I had last in a polite company, about the celebrated fable of Sigismonda and Guiscard, as translated from Boccace, by Mr. Dryden. This performance every body mentioned with an air of rapture; it was exquisitely tender in the sentiment; astonishingly nervous in the argument; and for vesification, was superior to any thing in the English language. For my own part, Mr. Babler, I could by no means see in what the amazing merit of this poem consisted: as to the tendency, I am sure it is to the last degree dangerous; as to the conduct, it is both against reason and nature; and as to the literary merit, though there is here and there an emanation of genius, yet where there is one tolerable line there are fifty infinitely too flat and insipid to be admitted into the last page of a common news-paper.

That

That I may not seem on this occasion to reckon without my host, I shall take the liberty of recapitulating the principal circumstances of the story; these therefore are as follow: Tancred, king of Salerno, had a most beautiful woman for a daughter, whom he married to a neighbouring monarch; but that prince dying, Sigismonda, which was the name of the lady, returned to her father's court, and was received with a degree of uncommon rapture by her father, who had always loved her with an incredible affection.

Unhappily, however, Sigismonda was of a most amorous constitution; the poet himself tells us,

“ Youth, health, and ease, and a most amorous  
     “ mind,  
 “ To second nuptials had her thoughts inclin'd,  
 “ And former joyshad left a secret *sling* behind.” }

Had I a design to criticise severely on the last line, I should naturally conclude that her deceased husband had bequeathed her some marks of his affection that required an immediate application to the surgeon: but little errors are below a serious observation. The *sling* here mentioned, I suppose, means nothing more than an encreased desire for a bed-fellow; and therefore I shall wave a comment upon the expression, and go on contentedly with my narrative.

The warmth of Sigismonda's constitution, however, would not permit her to do without a lover; in order therefore to gratify her wishes, and yet offer no violence to the laws of virtue, she cast her eyes round her father's court, and made

made choice of Guiscard, who had formerly been a page in the palace, and was not a little celebrated both for his mental and personal accomplishments; having determined in relation to the man, her next care was to make an appointment with him, which she effected in a very artful manner, and went to the place of rendezvous herself, attended by a priest, that matters might be settled out of hand.

Sigismonda having now obtained her great wish, a husband, contrived by every means in her power, to keep the matter still a secret from her father: but unluckily one day as she was giving a loose to the warmest transports with her beloved Guiscard, the old king accidentally became a witness of their intercourse, and believing very naturally that his daughter was a strumpet, determined, and in my opinion not unjustly, to take an ample revenge on the man who had, as he conceived, so audaciously violated the honour of his family; with this view he retired for that time unperceived, and ordered a couple of sturdy fellows to way-lay Guiscard, and take him into custody, the next time he paid a secret visit to the princess. This order was executed accordingly; and Sigismonda was stretched upon the lover's hell a whole night, impatiently waiting for the appearance of her husband, and burning at once with all the vehemence of the most ardent expectation, and all the fury of the most inordinate love.

Next morning when she appeared before her father, the good old king, to preserve the dignity of both their characters, treated her with his accustomed tenderness, till all their attendants retired; he then, in the most affecting terms, de-  
claimed



claimed upon her guilt, mentioned his own excessive fondness for her, and begged she would say something in extenuation of her crime, since it was impossible to varnish it over with any feasible excuse. He concluded, however, with the strongest menaces against Guiscard, still imagining that he was nothing more than the paramour of his daughter.

Hitherto Tancred's behaviour was nothing but what might be reasonably expected both from a monarch and a man. But the delicate Sigismonda, to establish the character of a heroine, was to act in immediate opposition to the sentiments of nature. Instead therefore of falling at her father's feet, and endeavouring to excite his pity and forgiveness, she put on the unblushing front of a Covent-garden strumpet; called him a tyrant repeatedly; and told him, that she had married Guiscard from an impossibility to live without an intercourse of sex with some body, since he (Tancred) took so little pains to get her another husband. That I may not seem to exaggerate I shall here give part of Tancred's speech, and part of her reply.

- " As I have lov'd, and yet I love thee more,
- " Than ever father lov'd a child before;
- " So that indulgence draws me to forgive;
- " Nature that gives thee life would have thee live.
- " But as a public parent of the state,
- " My justice, and thy crime, requires thy fate.
- " Fain would I choose a middle course to steer:
- " Nature's too kind, and justice too severe:
- " Speak for us both, and to the balance bring.
- " On either side the father and the king.

" Heav'n

"Heav'n knows my heart is bent to favour thee;  
 "Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest  
 "to me."

Here stopping with a sigh, he pour'd a flood  
 Of tears, to make the last expression good.—

From this behaviour of Tancred's, and from the prodigious fondness which he had always manifested for her, Sigismonda had the strongest reason in the world to expect a pardon from her father; but no—she was to treat the venerable prince with the utmost indignity; to set an example of ignorant disobedience to all posterity; and to sacrifice the life of a man whom she passionately loved, merely because the poet wanted to make her an heroine.—*Risum teneatis amici.*  
 —Here begins her answer.

"Tancred, I neither am disposed to make  
 "Request for life, nor offer'd life to take;  
 "Much less deny the deed, but least of all  
 "Beneath pretended justice weakly fall,  
 "My words to sacred truth shall be confin'd,  
 "My deeds shall shew the greatness of my mind.  
 "That I have lov'd I own; that still I love,  
 "I call to witness all the pow'rs above:  
 "Yet more I own; to Guiscard's love I give  
 "The small remaining time I have to live;  
 "And if beyond this life desire can be,  
 "Not fate itself shall set my passion free.  
 "This first avow'd; nor folly warp'd my mind,  
 "Nor the frail texture of the female kind  
 "Betray'd my virtue; for too well I knew  
 "What honour was, and honour had his due.  
 "Before the holy priest my vows were ty'd,  
 "So came I not a strumpet, but a bride;  
 "This

- " This for my fame, and for the public voice :  
 " Yet more, his merits justified my choice ;  
 " Which had they not, the first election thine,  
 " That bond dissolv'd, the next is freely mine ;  
 " Or grant I err'd, (which yet I must deny)  
 " Had parents pow'r even second vows to tie ;  
 " *Thy little care to mend my widow'd nights,*  
 " *Has forc'd me to recourse of marriage rites,*  
 " *To fill an empty side, and follow known de-*  
     *lights.*  
 " What have I done in this deserving blame ?  
 " State-laws may alter, nature's are the same ;  
 " These are usurp'd on helpless women kind,  
 " Made without our consent, and wanting pow'r  
     " to bind."

Sigismonda's harangue you know, Mr. Babler, is a very long one, and in several passages contains sentiments infinitely too gross for the ear of a delicate reader. The public, however, from these cursory observations, will immediately see, that the conduct of Tancred, if not totally excusable, has at least not a little to be said in it's defence ; and they will also see, that highly as Sigismonda has been admired for her spirit and her virtue by a number of writers, that admiration has been much more the effect of their complaisance than the result of her deservings.

I am, Sir, &c.

C R I T O.

NUMB.



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NUMB. LXIX. *Saturday, May 22.*

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To the BABLER.

S I R,

**W**ALKING lately through a church-yard to the northward of this metropolis, I was not a little entertained with an inscription upon the tombstone of an honest Cooper, which by way of arrogating his consequence, mentioned, that had he lived but two years longer, he had been junior warden of his company.

It is an absurd opinion which a great many people entertain, that pride and self-sufficiency are entirely confined to the superior orders of mankind, since the minutest examination into human nature would sufficiently convince us, that the veriest plebeian in creation has his species of vanity, and is possessed of some particular advantage, which in his own opinion gives him a pre-eminence over all the world; a ribband or a star we generally image to be no inconsiderable sources of self-sufficiency; yet I have seen a farmer's servant in his Sunday's cotton waistcoat, assume more airs, and strut about a village with a look of greater consequence than ever I saw among a croud of the first nobility in the drawing-room.

However we may look upon pride to be the offspring of condition, a very small share of recollection will convince us, that the latent principles of it are equally implanted in the bosoms of  
of



of high and low by the unrespecting hand of nature; and perhaps when we come to consider matters a little farther, we may find that this very pride is given us by the particular goodness of providence to reconcile us to our various situations, and to raise the chearful sun of serenity upon that lot, which we might otherwise be tempted to look upon with a constant mortification and regret. Thus far-self-sufficiency may be looked upon, not only as useful, but as fortunate: the moment, nevertheless, in which it leads us to forget what is due to the merits of others, that moment it deviates from the original end of its institution, becomes criminal as well as ridiculous, and equally exposes us to the universal aversion and the universal contempt.

The more we examine the behaviour of mankind, the less difference we shall find made by the circumstance of rank. The vices of the most opposite orders, like their follies, are pretty nearly related, and spring pretty much from the same motives, if we may form the least opinion by their ends: if the man of fashion squanders away an estate at Newmarket; the journeyman artizan is equally ready to part with his all at an humble game of Dutch pins, or the throwing of a piece at the shuffle-board: if his Grace finds the summit of human felicity in a *bon vivant* circle at Almacks or the Cocoa Tree, the porter is equally happy over a tankard of *Calvert's Entire Butt* at the Horse-shoe and Magpye, and looks upon himself to be every whit as much entitled to a right of damning the waiter, and disturbing the company, as the first lord in the universe; nay, in his amours, he is to the full  
as

as profligate, and will pick up his occasional *filles de joye*, with the same happy inattention to the constitution of his wife and the welfare of his family. Condition in fact is the child of fortune, and rank, though it may polish the course of nature, can never totally alter it; so that to suppose the various situations of life are not actuated by similar inclination in the main, is to suppose ourselves totally unacquainted both with the sentiments of the world, and the principles of common understanding.

To make a proper application of the foregoing reflexions, we must consider that in disposing of the various lots in human affairs, the benignity of providence intended an equal portion of felicity for all: he wisely designed that if the poor man had nothing more than a cottage, his wishes should be contracted to the scanty limits of his little hut; and meant to bless him with as ample a portion of content over an humble meal of vegetables, as if all the luxuries of the universe were collected for his entertainment, and served up in the most captivating rounds of an exquisite variety and a striking magnificence. It is generally the fault of man himself, if ever he is wretched. True happiness, as I have already said, exists only in the mind, however absurdly we may suppose it to the result from an affluence of circumstances, or an elevation of dignity; he therefore that complains of being miserable, does nothing more in fact, than upbraid himself with inconsistency; his wretchedness, if he seriously enters into a discussion of the matter, will be found to proceed from the want of something which he can do very well without; and every  
foundation

foundation of complaint will appear to be the consequence of his own folly, notwithstanding the impious supposition that it entirely arises from the unkindness of his God.

Of all the philosophers I ever met, I don't remember to have known so truly sensible a fellow as poor Dick Wilkins. Dick by never indulging too sanguine an expectation, was sure to encounter but few disappointments; where he wanted real foundations for *affirmative* happiness, if I may beg the word, he would build himself a kind of negative felicity, and out of misfortunes, which other people looked upon as irreparable, furnish himself with continual subjects of consolation. Thus when his house was burnt to the ground, instead of lamenting over the loss, he rejoiced that he himself had not perished in the flames; and once, when the small pox had snatched away a fine little girl, of whom he was excessively fond, Dick returned thanks to providence, that the distemper had communicated to no other person in his family; by this means he got the better of calamity, and started from the furnace of affliction with an additional degree of excellence in proportion as he was tried. Is it necessary to enforce this example with the reader of understanding? By no manner of means. Heroes and philosophers have been frequently proposed as objects of universal admiration, their lives, however, are infinitely inferior, in point of moral instruction, to honest Dick Wilkins; they may dazzle, but he delights; and though we dwell with a kind of awe upon the exalted tinsel of a celebrated name, yet reason always gives a preference to those



those characters, who have most eminently distinguished themselves both as christians and as men.

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NUMB. LXX. *Saturday, May 29.*

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**T**HOUGH it is universally allowed that we are every day arriving to a greater degree of knowledge in our theatrical entertainments, yet a number of sensible criticks are continually insisting that there is a visible decay in our dramatical productions; not only our performers, but our writers are mentioned in a light of the most contemptuous comparison with their predecessors of the last half century; and it is considered by the generality of people, as an instance either of the grossest ignorance, or the strongest presumption, to suppose any thing like an equal degree of abilities.

The gentlemen who criticise in this accurate manner, seem, however, to pay but little attention to the original institution of the stage; they imagine it was entirely calculated for amusement, without having the least view to the great business of instruction, and so it could produce a ridiculous laugh, no matter what became either of our morals or our understandings. This whimsical mode of thinking, it is easy to discover, has taken its rise from the comedies of Wycherly, Congreve, and Vanburg, who always with a culpable degree of levity, were endeavouring to say brilliant things, rather than just ones; and injudiciously imagined that a lively flash of wit was



was a sufficient excuse for the rankest indecencies, or the most palpable attack upon the religion of their country.

That our dramatic writers, before the last half century, might possess a greater share of wit than their successors I shall by no means deny; but then it does not follow that this superiority in wit, should entitle them to a superiority of reputation. Wit, in fact, is but a secondary requisite to a dramatic poet; judgment is the first qualification; and he that wisely attends to the cultivation of the mind, is by much a preferable writer to him, who sacrifices every thing to an agreeable flippancy of expression, and aims at nothing more than to excite the risibility of his auditors. For these reasons, though I admire Wycherly, Congreve, and Vanburg, as men of wit, yet as dramatic authors, I hold them in no extraordinary estimation: on the contrary, I look upon them with the greatest contempt, for perverting the original end of the stage, and prostituting such abilities as they possessed in the infamous purposes of licentiousness and immorality.

I am well aware that upon this occasion it will be remarked, that the literary levity of these celebrated writers was the vice of their age, and that in conformity to the general opinion, they were under a necessity of writing to the depravities of the people.—“If, say a number of our sagacious critics, the authors under consideration, represented human nature in a dissolute light, they represented human nature as they found it.—Their villains and their strumpets were characters very frequently met with, and they only caught the manners as they rose to reflect them  
with

with an additional energy on the public." This argument is evidently fallacious; and can scarce deserve a serious examination: to represent human nature as they found it, would have given no room for exception; but their great error was in representing those parts of it, in an amiable light, which were entitled to universal abhorrence and contempt. Their villains and their strumpets were set up as objects of general admiration; and vice fought under the mask of an agreeable vivacity, with a success that should make every feeling mind tremble, lest so dangerous a weapon as wit, should at any future period be unhappily lodged in such desperate hands.

It has often filled me with astonishment to hear men of good sense frequently arguing in defence of Wycherly, Congreve, and Vanburg, by saying that their wit should be an excuse for their licentiousness; and pleading that it was even worth our while to have vicious compositions, provided the vice was but decorated with such forcible attractions as these writers have given it. People who talk in this manner may indeed look down upon the corrector productions of later days, with an air of insuperable disgust. They may equally laugh at nature and instruction, and affect to ridicule every argument to which they find themselves unable to reply: but the judicious enquirer, will consider wit when employed in the destruction of virtue, as the most infamous of all prostitutions.—It is like a man of genius, who argues against the existence of the Deity; and becomes obnoxious to society in proportion as he is cursed with abilities; instead therefore, of being found a justification of  
the

the writers in dispute, it becomes, in my opinion, an invincible objection to their works; and the more we are fascinated with the brilliancy of their productions, the more we see a necessity for wishing those productions had perished at their first appearance under the hands of the common executioner.

The writers of the present times, however despised by the bigots of a dramatical heresy, have, if we may judge by their performances, an infinitely stronger claim to our admiration, than any of their celebrated predecessors, who actuated by an illiberal thirst of fame, were led to seek it from the depravities of mankind. They sensibly recollect that the sole end of the stage is to blend amusement with instruction; and therefore never neglect the heart, through a view of bawling to the imagination;—hence, instead of finding them eternally on the scent for snip-snap and repartee, we see them studious in the discovery of manly sentiments and laudable reflexions; and observe a general endeavour, while they labour for our approbation as writers, to obtain our good opinion as men. This good opinion they will be always sure of obtaining, as long as they prosecute the exalted principles which have hitherto influenced their conduct; and it is with the greatest satisfaction I see their pieces frequently represented to crowded audiences, while the productions of a Wycherly, a Congreve, and a Vanburg, are suffered to languish in the most merited contempt.

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NUMB. LXXI. *Saturday, June 5.*

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I KNOW nothing more dangerous than for a man of narrow circumstances to possess an agreeable voice, or to be master of any other requisite which exposes him to a continual round of company, and renders him particularly entertaining to his acquaintance. In such a case, the general applause, with which he meets, gives him an eternal disgust to industry; and fills him with no ambition but that of being called upon for another song, or requested to relate the last frolic within the purlieus of the garden.

I was yesterday taking a solitary walk in the Park, when I accidentally saw a figure seated on one of the benches, with the lines of whose face I found myself somewhat familiar, and in the course of half a turn recollected that it was a young fellow who had formerly been clerk to my friend Mr. Demur, a counsellor in Lincoln's-inn, and was turned away by his master, for a total neglect of business. I had been often at Mr. Demur's, and had always heard him speak of this young man with a particular esteem: to me he frequently recommended him on the score of uncommon honesty, and extraordinary abilities; nevertheless, he at the same time observed, that he never would be worth a groat. "The block-head, he used to say, sings an excellent song, and has a fund of humour that renders him infinitely entertaining; on this account, he has such a number of engagements upon his hands, that I cannot keep him a moment at

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“ the desk ; and though I love him almost as well as my own son, I must look out for somebody else to supply his place.”

When I came down the walk, the young fellow bowed to me, and as his appearance was uncommonly shabby, I had either the curiosity, or the good nature to go over to him, and enquire what brought him into such a miserable plight ; with the frankness that always accompanies a good heart, he told me it was his own folly ; and added, that those who wantonly sported with their own felicity, ought never to be pitied in the day of distress. The manner in which these last words were delivered, struck me very sensibly ; I therefore sat down with him on the bench, and requested if he could with propriety, that he would favour me with his story, assuring him I always had a tear at the service of the unfortunate, and probably he might experience that I had something else. Encouraged by this information, he gave a bow of assent, and proceeded with the following little narrative :

It is unnecessary, Sir, to tell you any thing about my education or family ; suffice it that though the former was not despicable, nor the latter ungentle, yet I had nothing to depend upon but my profession ; this indeed afforded me a tolerable probability of passing decently through life, had not an unhappy propensity to company fatally intervened, and rendered that application to business intolerable, which prudence pointed out as the only means of my support.

This propensity to company was increased to a considerable degree, from some trifling talents which I possessed to amuse, such as a passable song,

song, and a mode of telling a story with tolerable success. These qualifications procured me so much regard among my friends, that there never was a merry meeting appointed but Will Hargrave received an invitation; they were sure he would favour them with a joyous catch; and often these applications were made with a solicitude which tickled my vanity so highly, that I have suffered myself to be engaged a whole month without intermission, and kept as regular a list of my various taverns, as if I had been allowed a very handsome salary for my attendance. A custom of this nature could not be supported without a great deal of expence; a crown or half a guinea every night was rather too much for a man, who with salary and perquisites, scarcely made eighty pounds a year; the consequence of which was, that I ran into debt with every body that would trust me, and forfeited my reputation through an utter inability of discharging their demands: besides this, as I was always one of the last people who quitted company, I was generally intoxicated before I retired, and destroyed my constitution as much as I ruined my circumstances. A man who constantly went to bed in such a condition at four or five o'clock in the morning was but ill qualified for the necessary business of the day. After putting up with a thousand irregularities, your friend Mr. Demur, at last dismissed me; and my character being pretty well known to all the gentlemen of the profession, not a soul of them would receive me into his employ. In this situation a vintner, whose house I had often filled with company, arrested me for a debt of fourteen pounds, threw me into jail, and kept

me there till I was set at liberty by an act of grace at the end of four years. The hardships I underwent during the time of my confinement were unspeakable; for days together I have subsisted on nothing but the common allowance of the prison, and have thought myself happy if I could get a handful of straw to sleep on at night; a shirt was luxury with which I was utterly unacquainted for eighteen months; and during the last year, my intire wardrobe consisted of an old plaid night-gown, a pair of decayed Morocco slippers of different colours, a worsted night-cap, and a black stock. I almost forgot the use of breeches and stockings, and could I dare to say have passed a winter in Greenland, without any apprehension from the coldness of the season or the place. Fortunately, a week or two before my release, an Irish author, who was just put in for libelling the government, happened to hear of me, and gave me an invitation to his room; I had long learned to disregard the delicacies of dress, and therefore attended him without delay; he was sensible and generous in every respect, unless his compassion to me should be reckoned an impeachment, either of his understanding or his munificence, for before I took my leave, he made me a present of two very handsome suits of cloathes, and half a dozen ruffled shirts, together with every other necessary, such as hat and wig, shoes and stockings, so that when I equipped myself, I might have easily made my escape at the gate, as it was scarcely possible to know me in such a happy alteration of circumstances. My benefactor's generosity did not stop here; for, the morning after I was discharged, he sent me five guineas,  
and

and wishing me every happiness I could wish myself, advised me to make a good use of what instruction I had received in the school of adversity. I intended to have thanked him the next day; but unhappily that evening he had a difference with a brother prisoner, about some inconsiderable subject of a political nature, in which he received the lye; this being an affront, which an Irishman never pardons, he insisted upon instant satisfaction: both parties immediately drew, and my generous friend by some accident happening to stumble just as his antagonist was making a lunge, he received a thrust through the body, and expired on the spot; the other gentleman was tried, but as it was proved the challenge was given by the deceased, the survivor had a verdict of man slaughter brought in against him, and suffered the punishment of being burned with a *cold iron*, agreeable to the customary practice.

To return however to myself: being now quite clear with the world, and dressed in a manner tolerably smart, I sallied forth, and was met by some of my quondam acquaintance, who when I was perishing would not supply me with a sixpence; but who now were rejoiced at seeing me in so happy a situation; they insisted on my spending the evening with them at a club, which they held every night in the neighbourhood of Temple-Bar, and hoped I would not take it amiss if they insisted upon charging my quota to the general account, for the pleasure of my company. I was not lost to sensibility: in the meridian of my own little affluence I had done kind things to others, but never insulted their distresses. The manner of the proposal affected



me, though I was under a necessity of agreeing to the proposal itself; I therefore went, and was treated with all the usual disrespect which poverty generally feels from underbred prosperity. I was commanded to sing by one with a look of authority; a second ordered me to tell a story; and a third cracked an insolent joke about my want of breeches in prison, and told me, with a loud laugh, I would have made an excellent highlander. In short, though every body courted my conversation, yet every body treated me with contempt; and I never suffered more severely under the hand of insolence than when I ministered most to its satisfaction; though I tore my lungs almost to pieces for half a dozen hours, still I was under an obligation for being treated to a two shilling reckoning; and it even now has come to such a pass, that I am looked upon as an incumbrance to the society; not knowing where to get a bit of bread, I came here to-day, intending to list myself in the guards; but being torn by a thousand different thoughts, I threw myself into this seat to ruminate a little further, when the earnestness with which you were pleased to eye me, obliged me to pull off my hat, and laid a foundation for all this insignificant garrulity.

Here poor Mr. Hargrave ended; I will not comment on this story,—if the relation itself is not capable of instruction, it is in vain to moralize, and in vain to talk of prudence and œconomy; all I shall therefore mention is, that he sets out next week in a lucrative employ for one of our plantations: and I doubt not, as he is yet a very young man, but what a few years will see him in possession of a very ample fortune.

NUMB.

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NUMB. LXXII. *Saturday, June 12.*

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I WAS chatting yesterday evening over a dish of tea at my sister Rattle's when the amiable Kitty Harold, a distant relation of ours, happened to come in with her usual freedom, but with an appearance of mingled concern and resentment; the moment she saw me she cried, "O, Mr. Babler, I have an admirable subject for your next paper. You must know, continued she, that in my way here I accidentally called at your old acquaintance Mrs. Acid's, in Pall Mall, and found her engaged with an extensive circle of company. While I staid there, one of the footmen came up and informed his lady that there was a well-dressed gentleman below enquiring after her health, but that hearing she was so much engaged, she was preparing to go away, and would take some other opportunity of paying her respects. Mrs. Acid you know is one of those prodigiously important people who pique themselves upon their superior understandings, and are continually giving an air of consequence to the minutest actions: in hopes therefore of displaying her sagacity before her company, she sent to desire the lady would be so kind as to walk up; in consequence of which a mighty genteel woman indeed, was introduced, who came in with a very visible diffidence, and was with much pressing prevailed upon to sit down. Madam, says Mrs. Acid, with her customary

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"dignity

“dignity of tone and solemnity of feature, Pray  
“what has procured me the honour of this visit?  
“the lady with a respectful hesitation, replied,  
“I thought, madam, I should have found you  
“alone, or I would not have presumed—but I  
“suppose you have quite forgot a Sally Edwards,  
“who lived with you about seven years ago;”  
“What, exclaimed Mrs. Acid, in an air of the  
“greatest surprise, are you Sally Edwards who  
“lived with me at Richmond, and had a bastard  
“by young Mr. Barrington, of Twickenham—  
“O I remember you very well—why I hear he  
“has since married you—well and come tell  
“me.” Mrs. Acid would probably have continued this good-natur’d strain considerably longer, had not the poor woman’s confusion got the better of her spirits, and thrown her into a fit from which she was not recovered without much difficulty; as soon however as she came to herself, she burst into tears, and making as decent a curtesy as her situation could possibly admit, went out of the room. Unmoved with her distress, the obliging Mrs. Acid called after her down stairs; “Dont be uneasy, Sally, when  
“you come this way again pray bring the little  
“boy with you.” I really could have slap’t the unmerciful woman for her barbarity: but she, as if she had performed the most meritorious action in the world, turned round to the company, and gave us the following history of poor Sally Edwards.

“Her father was a Shropshire Clergyman of very little preferment in the church; but if a large family might be looked upon as a foundation for felicity, there was not a happier man in the county, for he had fourteen children. The  
excellence

excellence of his character, however, made some provision for the most of them, and one friend or another gradually took the greatest number off his hands. This Sally, of all his children, was the greatest favourite; he would never part with her, but brought her up with a remarkable degree of tenderness, and even pinched himself very frequently to give her an education rather superior to her fortune. His solicitude for her improvement, Mrs. Acid declares was not thrown away: on the contrary, she assured us that Sally was very prettily accomplished; and added, in her way, that she was also not intolerably tempered, nor much unacquainted with the management of a family.

When Sally had reached her twentieth year, a fever which her father had caught in attending a poor parishioner, carried him off, and the amiable orphan was obliged to look out for some tolerable family, where her servitude might furnish her with bread. Mrs. Acid at that time happened to be down at her sister's in Shropshire, near whose house Mr. Edwards had lived. At her sister's request she took Sally, being then without a maid, and in a few weeks after departed for London. From thence she removed to Richmond, where Sally became by some means acquainted with a very genteel young fellow, one Mr. Barrington, the son of a gentleman who possessed two thousand pounds a year. Mr. Barrington made use of numberless arts to steal her from the paths of virtue, and even offered half the reversion of his father's estate to purchase her disgrace. These overtures Sally treated with a becoming scorn, yet she had a latent prepossession in his favour, which would



not suffer her to resign the dangerous pleasure of his acquaintance. Every hour she could spare was passed with him, and he kept himself so secretly concealed, that his rank was never once suspected in the neighbourhood. Young Barrington did not want honour; he saw the goodness of his mistress's heart, notwithstanding the humility of her station, and therefore disregarding what the world might say on the occasion, very frankly proposed to marry her. This proposal immediately ruined the unfortunate Sally Edwards; what formerly he could not obtain for worlds, now fell an easy sacrifice to his generosity. She confessed she loved him; but absolutely refused the honour of his hand till after the death of his father, declaring she could not support the shock of creating a disturbance in his family. When a woman once owns her love for a man there is scarce a toss up between her and destruction. Every hour she is alone with him after such a confession, she totters on the verge of her fate; and even let the man have never so much honour, there are times in which the whirlwind of his passions will tear up every trace of recollection, and occasion more guilt in a second, than can possibly be atoned for in course of a whole life. In one of these times Mr. Barrington met Sally Edwards; and in about six months after the consequences of this criminal intercourse obliged the unhappy girl to take an abrupt leave of her place. The sequel however is more fortunate than could be expected. Old Mr. Barrington died near a twelvemonth since, and his son has been married to Sally above half a year. This it seems was her first coming to town since that joyful event, and  
in

in hopes to recover the good opinion of her former mistress, she had taken the liberty of calling at Pall-Mall. Mrs. Acid nevertheless embraced the opportunity to insult her in the manner I have mentioned; and so far from feeling any compunction, she told us at the end of the story, that she was always known to speak her mind, and fancied upon this occasion that she had given a *tolerable hint*, as she called it, to Sally Edwards."

Here Miss Harold finished her little narrative, but the subject being dwelt upon while she staid, I shall conclude the present paper with one or two of her remarks. "I always observe, Mr. Babler, (says she) that those people who pique themselves particularly on the virtue of a rude sincerity, have seldom any other virtue in the composition of their characters. A complacency of manners though it does not always constitute humanity, nevertheless gives an embellishment to human nature, and often, from the very appearance of goodness, we are apt to fall in love with the reality. It would therefore be well, that people who are fond of speaking indelicate truths to others, would reverse situations a little, and only imagine what effect it would have upon their own feelings, was an indelicate truth to be mentioned to themselves. Whenever we change situations with mankind, we are most likely to judge with propriety; and we may be certain of never censuring the errors of our neighbours with too great a degree of severity, if we make but a candid examination into our own."

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NUMB. LXXIII. *Saturday, June 19.*

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*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**N**Otwithstanding what is generally understood by the terms *good breeding*, it is become a sort of science; and notwithstanding the generality of a man's acquaintance may be able to come into a room with a tolerable grace, and behave upon most occasions with the most perfect decorum, there are nevertheless a number of indelicacies in which many of our first pretenders to politeness imperceptibly indulge themselves, though a moments recollection would convince the most obstinate, that nothing can possibly be more disagreeable.

I dined about a week ago in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, at the house of an old friend, with whom I make it a kind of point to pass a day once a twelvemonth: this gentleman, together with his whole family, pique themselves, not a little, upon their knowledge in the minutest article of breeding, and are universally esteemed a very polite set by the most critical circle of their acquaintance. Upon my entrance I was received with all the forms of the nicest ceremony; my health was particularly enquired after by the lady of the house and her four daughters; and a tooth ach which I laboured under about ten months before, was lamented with a world of complaisance by them all. When the salutations of the seasons were over, I was permitted to take a chair, which I did by my friend,  
at

at one corner of the fire, and left the rest to the old lady and her daughters. For a full half hour we sat in a sleepiness of silent stupidity; not so much as a single question passed between us, either about the state of the nation, or the state of the theatre: on the contrary, both the ministers and the players were suffered to remain in peace; and the only instance which any of us gave of being alive, was the youngest Miss Martin, who occasionally played with a favourite cat, and once or twice threw down the poker and tongs in the prosecution of that pretty amusement.

Silence was, however, at last broke by Mrs. Martin, who taking out a pocket handkerchief, which in several places was almost glewed together by a certain quantity of snuffy saliva, sagaciously took notice that the weather was very damp; at the same time that she made this remark, she pulled the handkerchief out of its plaits, and held it before the fire to dry, where to do her justice, it smoked in such a manner as evidently supported the propriety of her observation. She had no sooner done this than Mr. Martin, as if he understood it to be a signal, began an incessant coughing, and every other moment discharged large lumps of tough phlegm against the bars of the stove, which kept up a constant hissing, like so many sausages in a frying-pan. A concert of this kind I cannot say was very much to my fancy, so that by the time the summons came for dinner, I had completely lost my stomach, and was infinitely more fit for a bed than a haunch of venison.

During dinner time, however, matters were rather aggravated than redressed! Mr. Martin helped me with the same fork that just before had  
been



been employed in picking his teeth, and his amiable lady more than once dropped some of Hard-harm's best Stratzburg among my gravy, though that was a favour which I by no means wished for, or solicited; to encrease my satisfaction, I happen to be a great favourite with two of the young ladies, and generally sit between them when I pay a visit at their father's. In order to shew their attention to me, therefore, whenever I wanted any thing, rather than suffer me to wait an instant, they kindly helped me from their own plates; and Miss Jenny in particular insisted, when the footman went down stairs for bread, that I should take her slice, though it bore the sign of half a dozen teeth, no way remarkable either for their whiteness or regularity.

Dinner being at length happily over, I flattered myself that I had gone through the principal fatigue of the day, though had I once taken the trouble of reflecting on the practice of former years, I might have easily known I was to suffer some additional mortifications. The interval between dinner and the hour of tea, was employed in a general invective against the plague of keeping servants, in which Mrs. Martin gave notable proofs of a profound domestic understanding. This subject I found was perfectly agreeable to the young ladies; they remembered, with the greatest facility, the saucy answer which their maid Hannah had given on such a time; how long Edward had staid on such an errand; and with what a degree of pertness the cook took her warning on such an occasion: to the various parts of this delightful topic, politeness obliged me to answer with a *very true, Madam; and you are perfectly right, Miss;*

*Mifs*; though, at the same time, I could have almost wished the whole group in a horse pond, for teizing me with such a mixture of common place cant and sober malevolence. Whether my friend, Mr. Martin, saw me uneasy or no, I cannot answer, but he luckily desired that tea might be ordered in, which gave a fresh turn to the conversation.

There is a practice at the general run of tea-tables, for the company to pour the remains of every cup into a particular basin; and in this comfortable mixture of slops, the elegance of underbred delicacy always rinses the various cups in the order they are emptied. Mrs. Martin, who values herself highly on the proper discharge of the tea-table duties, is a warm friend to this delicious custom; and always takes care to clean the cup of each individual in the united slabberings of the whole. For my part, though I am far from being a nice man, yet I prefer my own dirt to the dirt of other people, and, on that account, endeavour to guard my cup from undergoing so extraordinary a purification wherever I know this mode of rinsing is kept up. Mrs. Martin, however, was not to be eluded—Under a supposition that my backwardness in this respect, proceeded from a fear of giving her the least trouble, she insisted on my cup, with a good natured peremptoriness, and obliged me to pretend a sudden pain in the head to avoid the disagreeable consequences of her misguided civility. Armed with this excuse, I took my leave, not a little happy at so fortunate an escape, where I was afraid I should have been obliged to pass the whole evening.

From

From this little picture, Mr. Babler, your readers may, perhaps, be led to reflect upon the disagreeable shake of a sweaty hand; the indelicate custom of picking one's nose; and the unpardonable practice of standing with our backs to the fire on a cold day, by which we entirely cut off every possible beam of warmth from the rest of the company. These, sir, are errors in which the politest part of our people indulge themselves, as well as the most underbred; and they are errors of so disagreeable a nature, that I heartily wish, for the credit of our country, we would once resolve to shake them off, as they are not only the objects of our own ridicule, but are also ridiculed by every sensible nation in Europe.

I am, yours, &c.

DEMOCRITUS.

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NUMB. LXXIV. *Saturday, June 26.*

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**T**HEODOSIA was the daughter of a gentleman in Oxfordshire, who possessed an estate of seven hundred pounds a year. Her education was remarkably elegant, and her person was such as procured her a croud of admirers before she was quite eighteen. Among the number who declared themselves openly her lovers, a young Baronet of great fortune made his addresses, and offered settlements so extremely advantageous, that old Mr. Lestock, her father, immediately



immediately gave his concurrence, and a day was set apart for celebrating their nuptials with the greatest magnificence.

It has been very judiciously observed by an able writer, that there is no time of a woman's life so dangerous as the interval between her confession of an affection for a lover, and the day of her marriage. The consciousness of being tenderly beloved, emboldens an admirer to take liberties; and the man who but the moment before would have knelt down with all the respect of the profoundest veneration to request the favour of kissing her hand, will think himself sufficiently warranted, when she acknowledges that he has a share in her heart, to dwell upon her lips for an hour, and to loll upon her bosom with the most intimate fullness of familiarity. Besides this, the freedom of access which is always allowed to a man in such a situation, furnishes him with numberless opportunities of repeating his liberties; and even if he goes to indelicate lengths, he knows he can easily obtain an excuse from a fond and believing woman, who attributes his very licentiousness to the extravagance of his love.

The truth of this observation was never more fully verified than in the unhappy subject of the present little narrative. She doted upon Sir Edward Ellison with the most passionate fondness, and could scarcely be said to exist, but when he was in her company. Naturally susceptible of the softest impressions, she would even burst into a flood of tears, with an excess of tenderness when she only looked at him attentively, and more than once did she actually sink under the weight of her own transports, when he squeezed  
her



her hand with any great degree of vehemence, or gave a loose to the language of his love with more than an ordinary share of fervour and ecstasy. The misguided father of the unfortunate young lady, so far from being continually on his guard against the dangerous tendency of his daughter's affection, rejoiced that he had found a husband so very much to her taste; and so far from seeing the absolute necessity of never trusting her any time alone with her lover, left them frequently together after he went to bed, and permitted them to pass whole hours in the most uninterrupted exchange of mutual vows and felicitations. One fatal Monday night however, about eleven o'clock, the two lovers were by themselves in the back parlour, making up a little quarrel which had happened between them in the beginning of the evening. The reciprocal concessions which this circumstance occasioned, insensibly softened the bosoms of both, and as insensibly led the one to offer, and the other to permit, a still encroaching freedom of caresses; at such a crisis neither reason nor pride can prescribe a limit to the passions, nor take upon them to say, "Thus far will I go and no farther;" in proportion as the tide of tenderness arises, both reason and pride are absorbed; and it is no wonder when we suffer such a sacrifice to be made of our understanding, that we become equally regardless of our peace and our reputation.

The morning after this guilty intercourse, when Sir Edward came a little to his recollection, he was distracted with a variety of different opinions relative to Miss Lestock's behaviour; but though he really loved her as he did his own soul,  
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he at last concluded with a degree of meanness pretty common with the generality of his sex, that her weakness was more the effect of a natural incontinence, than the result of an excessive tenderness for him; and therefore he determined to break off all correspondence with her at once, as a woman utterly unworthy the honour of being his wife.

This resolution he had no sooner formed than he carried into execution, by dispatching a letter to the wretched Miss Lestock and her father, with the common place awkward apologies for his behaviour, and a repeated wish for the happiness of the lady, though he himself was taking the only step which could rob her of happiness for ever: it is as needless as it is difficult, to paint the distraction which this unexpected information created in Mr. Lestock's family. Poor Theodosia now loved the ungenerous baronet with an increased affection. The guilty commerce which had passed between them, so far from diminishing her regard, had given a sharper edge than ever to her love, and mingled a sort of phrenzy with her affection, that rendered it impossible to live in a state of separation from Sir Edward Ellison; suffice it therefore that, when she heard the purport of his epistle, she fell senseless on the floor, and was conveyed by her father and some of the servants to bed, where she continued delirious for four days, incessantly raving on her perfidious lover, and relating the indiscretion into which he had so unhappily drawn her on the preceding Monday evening. In this exigence the unhappy father wrote up to his son, who was a lieutenant in the guards, desiring to see him immediately, as an affair had unexpectedly

pectedly happened, which greatly concerned both the honour and happiness of the family. On the receipt of this letter, captain Lestock instantly set out, and reached his father's seat in a few hours after.

Captain Lestock was about Sir Edward Ellison's age, just twenty-four, but possessed of a certain elevation of sentiment to which the baronet was a stranger; he was besides, a young fellow of a temper naturally impetuous and daring, had reduced the various points of honour into an absolute system; and among the various points of polite education in which he excelled, he was universally allowed by his acquaintance to be one of the best swordsmen in this kingdom. A man of this cast therefore, was the most improper person in the world to be consulted in an exigence where the honour of his family and the happiness of his sister were at stake. Mr. Lestock however, was in too distracted a situation of mind to give a serious consideration to consequences: on the contrary, he rather aggravated matters than softened them; and desired his son the instant he came down, to take a ride over to Sir Edward's, to talk to him about his barbarity to Theodosia; and to persuade him, if possible, into a performance of those engagements, which formerly subsisted between him and his unfortunate daughter.

Captain Lestock scarcely heard his father out, than flying to his horse, he instantly set off for Sir Edward's, boiling with rage, and determined to call the perfidious baronet to the severest account, unless he made the most ample satisfaction to his sister and the whole family. Fraught with sentiments of this nature he arrived at Sir Edward's



Edward's house, and found him unluckily at home. At the first mention of his name, captain Lestock was admitted; a few minutes however were wasted in the idle parade of an affected good-breeding, which the custom of this country has rendered absolutely necessary to be observed between the greatest enemies. Sir Edward was rejoiced to see captain Lestock, though he was the only man existing whom he would wish to avoid; and captain Lestock with the most obliging solicitude enquired after Sir Edward's health, though he could that moment have taken him by the throat, and sacrificed him to the manes of his sister's murdered reputation.

At last business was proceeded upon; and the captain expressed his utmost indignation at the treatment which Theodosia had received; and hoped the man of honour which Sir Edward had always proved himself, would immediately repair the injury he had committed, and prevent the disagreeable necessity of forcing that person to be an enemy, who was most in the world inclined to be his friend. Captain Lestock pronounced this with a tone and manner which were rather a little of the most peremptory. No body could love a sister with more tenderness than the captain; his affection therefore mingled with his pride, and his resentment possessed a kind of dignity, which the baronet who was to the full as proud a man as himself, could by no means allow; the superiority which young Lestock seemed to claim upon this occasion, he therefore answered with a determined air, that, though he could not pretend to justify the part he had acted to miss Lestock, he nevertheless could not bear to be bullied into any concessions;



sions; and would by no means do that at the request of her relations, which he did not think proper to perform at her own. An answer of this nature soon produced very desperate consequences; the captain gave Sir Edward but one alternative; an immediate marriage, or an immediate duel; the baronet accepted of the latter, and in less than three minutes was left dead on his own floor.

The news of this affair reached the unfortunate Theodosia, even before the captain himself returned to his father's; but tho' that wretched young lady exclaimed against her perfidious lover in the most violent terms, before any measure was taken for punishing him, she was now utterly unable to bear the news of his death; the remembrance of his crime was totally absorbed in the recollection of his misfortune; the elegance of his person, the softness of his address, and the vehemence of his passion, alone rose up to her imagination, and filled her once more with tenderness and despair. In the confusion therefore which the whole family were in about her brother's safety, she took an opportunity of stabbing herself with a penknife, and died pronouncing the name of her adored Sir Edward Ellison. The affair however did not terminate here: Captain Lestock was tried for the murder of the baronet, and with much difficulty acquitted, while his unhappy father had the gout thrown into his stomach, in consequence of the agitation which he suffered, and was carried off lamenting that he ever had a passionate son, or an infatuated daughter.

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The moral which I would deduce from this little story shall be contained in the following observations: The generality of people, when the reputation of a sister sustains an injury, always look upon themselves as obliged to call the spoiler to an account who has thus infamously violated her honour, without recollecting that the very means which he seeks to redress her, is the surest method of rendering her miserable; and that she would a thousand times sooner see a dagger plunged into the heart of the man who stands up in her defence, than see the least accident whatsoever happen to the person who has so cruelly destroyed the tranquillity of her own. Highly soever as the women rail against a perfidious lover in the whirlwind of their fury, nevertheless they experience a multitude of moments in which the dear deceiver becomes, if possible, more exquisitely beloved on account of his very perfidy, and gains an additional empire over the heart of his injured mistress, from the only circumstance in nature which should entitle him to her everlasting abhorrence and contempt. For these reasons therefore I would never advise a parent or a brother to take a manual revenge on the man who injures his daughter or his sister with her own consent: if she has been weak enough to sacrifice her honour, she will be base enough to sacrifice her family; and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to hazard a life in vindication of a woman, who all the time wishes the person may be murdered, who generously rises in her behalf, and labours for her redress.

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NUMB. LXXV. *Saturday, July 3.*

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**T**HE following letter is the production of a young lady, and carries so much justice and good sense, that we insert it with pleasure, and take the liberty of soliciting her future correspondence.

*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**I** AM the daughter of a man of fashion at the west end of the town, and have received as liberal an education as my sex would admit of, through the care of the most indulgent parents, whose principal study seems a solicitude for my welfare: yet, Sir, though they have taken the utmost pains in the formation of my mind by precept, they set me such unaccountable examples, that if I was not possessed of some little fortitude in the application of their lessons, I might be very apt to shew a perfect unconcern for the most rigid they have hitherto endeavoured to instil.

My father's first admonition upon my arriving at any years of discretion was to warn me against the libertines of his sex, and above all things, to set the most invaluable esteem upon my reputation. Yet, Sir, the very father who gave this advice, is, to my infinite mortification, as free a liver as any of those whom he  
advised



advised me to detest. He has been laying schemes for the seduction of innocence, at a time he has been proving the betrayers of virtue to be the most infamous of men, and striving to destroy the character of another person's daughter at the very hour he appeared anxious for the security of his own.

This, Sir, is not all: my papa has often lectured me to avoid the least acquaintance with any man notoriously attached to his glass, declaring, as his positive opinion, that none but fools or madmen, ever drank to excess: yet, would you believe, Sir, that he himself frequently stays out whole nights at the tavern, and particularly piques himself upon bearing a bottle more than any of his acquaintance. He has told me to avoid a quarrelsome man as a pest to society, at the moment he himself was writing a challenge to a friend, and forbade me, on pain of his displeasure, ever to think of a Newmarket lover, though he never misses a meeting himself, and is known to be passionately fond of the turf.

My mamma, Sir, is a truly good woman, but has her inconsistencies too: the first lesson I received from her was to be humble to all my inferiors, and to lessen any seeming severity in their stations of life, by shewing the utmost complacency in mine. Would you think, Sir, that after a document of this nature, my mamma herself should forever insist upon preserving her dignity, and look upon it as a derogation if she favoured any of her inferiors with any thing more than a constrained interrogation, or a forbidding sort of nod. She has always advised me to shew complaisance and condescension to the servants, though she treats them in a very dif-



ferent manner herself; and above all things, has instructed me to avoid satirical reflections on my acquaintance, though she never spoke of hers without some little acidity, some colour of reprehension, or appearance of dislike.

Cards I am under the severest prohibition of touching, yet my mamma has sat up whole nights to my knowledge, at a party at whist; and I have been taught an aversion to all finery and parade at a time when her own table has been covered with diamonds, and the room scattered over with patterns of the most expensive silks. In short, Sir, I have scarcely received a lesson from my mamma, which her own example has not been calculated to destroy; nor a document from my father but what his conduct has turned into contempt. In my religion, as well as the less important concerns, I receive instructions which they never practice, and am taught to look up on an absence from church as a most unpardonable error, though it is seven years since they have appeared at any place of public worship themselves.

It may, perhaps, be thought something extraordinary, Sir, that a daughter should speak of her parents in a manner so free as I have just taken the liberty of doing; but sure it is rather more extraordinary of parents to supply the opportunity, and to differ so widely in every instance of their conduct from every precept of their advice. Young people, Sir, are but too apt to give into the follies of their time, without having the example of the sage and the sensible to keep them in countenance, and it is no way surprising that they should adopt the manners of those people whom they have been taught for  
many

many years to reverence and esteem. If my notions are honoured with your approbation, Mr. Babler, give this letter a place, and believe me to be, with much respect, yours,

ELEONORA.

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NUMB. LXXVI. *Saturday, July 10.*

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**I**T is a fine observation of the very learned and ingenious doctor Goldsmith, in the Vicar of Wakefield, an excellent Novel, with which he has lately obliged the public, that tho' the poorer part of mankind may in this world suffer more inconveniencies than the rich, still upon their entrance into another life, the joys of hereafter will be enhanced by contrast, in proportion to their afflictions here; and that consequently there can be no room to suppose the least partiality in providence, since sooner or later those who are entitled to its benignity are certain of meeting with an equal degree of favour from its hand.

This reflexion must undoubtedly be considered as a masterly vindication of that exterior disparity in the dispensations of providence, at which our modern infidels seem to triumph with so unceasing a satisfaction; and it must undoubtedly yield a sublime consolation to the bosom of wretchedness to think, that if the opulent are blessed with a continual round of temporal felicity, they shall at least experience some moments of so superior a rapture in the immediate presence

sence of their God, as will fully compensate for the seeming severity of their former situations.

Yet though there are a variety of calamitous circumstances in which this reflexion must administer the most lively consolation, nevertheless if we make a proper enquiry into the state of human nature we shall find, that in general the justice of providence can be fully vindicated without going to this remote and delicate consideration. It does not by any means follow, that because people are contracted in their fortunes, they should be wretched in their minds; nor does it by any means follow, that the greatness of their opulence should be put up as a criterion of their content.

The principal number of those hydraheaded evils with which we perpetually torment ourselves, are the mere effect of a ridiculous pride, or a narrow understanding. Actuated by one or the other of these unfortunate causes, we are busy in creating an endless round of imaginary difficulties, as if the numberless accidents to which we are naturally exposed were not in themselves abundantly sufficient to imbitter the little span of our sublunary durations, and to dash the short-lived moments of satisfaction, with anxiety and distress.

The generality of mankind when they take a survey of the world, are apt to estimate by the gradations of rank the gradations of happiness; hence next to a man with a coach and six we think he must necessarily be the greatest object of envy who keeps a coach and four; after this we rank a chariot and pair, and think that person indeed possesses but a little share of felicity who cannot afford an hour or two's excursion in  
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an humble hack, or take an eighteen-penny fare in an occasional sedan.

Look on the other side the scene, and see how amazingly the picture is altered. The pride of coronetted pomp continually languishes for the peaceful cottage of rustic obscurity; and the man who has a hundred downy pillows at his command, imagines that repose is only to be met with in the peasant's solitary shed. Thus all of us discontented with the lot which we really possess, and languishing for the state with which we are utterly unacquainted, it is no wonder that many inconsiderate people endeavour by an act of suicide to throw off the severity of their own yoke, and to get free from a weight of oppressions which is constantly becoming more and more insupportable through the folly of themselves.

Yet as in the extensive round of the most elaborate investigation, we generally find the rich as discontented with their lot as the poor; we must naturally conclude, that the great author of all things has even in this world designed a pretty equal degree of happiness for his creatures, notwithstanding the evident disparity of their situations. Indeed if we saw felicity in proportion to opulence, or could measure the real enjoyments of life by the standard of rank, we might reasonably imagine that the poor were not to receive their share of the divine benig- nity till they were going to possess it in a glo- rious eternity; but when we see that the meanest labourer in the street reaps as much pleasure over his underbred amusement as the first nobleman in the kingdom can possibly boast from the po- litest entertainment; and when we see the first



make as hearty a dinner on a single shin of beef, as the latter ever enjoys at a table of fifty covers, we cannot but suppose that the common lot of mankind is nearly alike; and that all the impious accusations which have arisen from an imaginary partiality in providence, are the mere result of an ignorant pride, or the consequence of an affectation, no less destructive to our reputation in this world, than injurious to our felicity in the next.

Upon the whole, however, if we consider that let our lot in this life be never so severe, it is still infinitely better than what we are entitled to from our own deserts; if we reflect that every blessing which is showered upon us by the hand of heaven, is a blessing which proceeds from the excess of its own goodness, and does not arise from any immediate merit in us: I say, if we consider these things with a proper degree of weight, and follow the dictates of that conviction which they must instantly strike upon our minds, we shall soon see that till we deserve the favour of existing at all, we cannot deserve to have our lives rendered comfortable in this probationary state; and that of course we ought to be thankful to the Deity for such instances of his benignity, as he may think proper to distinguish us with, instead of blasphemously murmuring that he does not honour us with more.

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NUMB. LXXVII. *Saturday, July 17.*

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THE term *world* is a word which every body uses to signify the circle of his own acquaintance; and which the meanest plebeian of the community has as frequently in his mouth as the greatest personage in the kingdom. The man of fashion confines the world entirely to the elegant card-tables, and well-bred assemblies which he frequents. The soldier to the customary licentiousness in which the gentlemen of the army are indulged; the lawyer to the clamour of Westminster-hall; and the merchant to the most dextrous method of driving a bargain. Thus in fact the world is not the general state of nature, but the narrow little circle of our own connections; and thus, instead of judiciously endeavouring to extend the scanty limits of our knowledge, we mislead ourselves into an opinion that we already know every thing; and sink into an absolute ignorance of the most essential points, from an absurd supposition of being perfectly acquainted with them all.

I remember about thirty years ago, when my old acquaintance Tom Welbank first came from the university, that there was scarcely a company which he went into for six months, but what considered him as a fool or a madman. Tom lodged at an uncle's near the Hay-market, who lived in a very genteel manner, and frequently saw the best company. This uncle having no children himself, had adopted Mr. Wel-

bank as his son; and conceiving from the reports which the university of Oxford gave of his nephew's erudition, a very high opinion of the young gentleman's abilities, he made a party on purpose to display the talents of his boy, who was previously advised to exert himself on the occasion. The company consisted of two noblemen in the ministry, an eminent divine, a celebrated physician, a dramatic writer of reputation, the late Mr. Pope, and lady Mary Wortley Montague.

The time before dinner was passed in one of those unmeaning random sorts of conversation, with which people generally fill up the tedious interval to an entertainment; but after the cloth was taken away poor Tom was singled out by lady Mary, who asked him with the elegant intrepidity of distinction, if he did not think London a much finer place than Oxford. Tom replied, that if her ladyship meant the difference in size or magnificence of building, there could be no possibility of a comparison; but if she confined herself to the fund of knowledge which was to be acquired at either of the places, the advantage lay entirely in favour of Oxford; this reply he delivered in a tone confident enough, but rather elevated with the dignity of academical declamation; however, it would have passed tolerably, had he not endeavoured to blaze out all at once with one of those commonplace eulogiums on classical literature, which we are so apt to meet with in a mere scholar quite raw from an university. In this harangue upon the benefits of education, he ran back to all the celebrated authorities of antiquity, as if the company required any proof of that nature to support



support the justice of his argument; and did not conclude without repeated quotations from the Greek and Latin writers, which he recited with an air of visible satisfaction. Lady Mary could not forbear a smile at his earnestness, and turning about to Mr. Pope, "I think, Sir, (says she in a half suppressed whisper) Mr. Welbank is "a pretty scholar, but he seems a little unacquainted with the world." Tom who overheard this whisper was about to make some answer, when Mr. Pope asked him, if there were any new poetical geniuses rising at Oxford. Tom upon this seemed to gain new spirits, and mentioned Dick Townly who had wrote an epigram on Chloe; Ned Frodsham who had published an ode to spring; and Harry Knowles who had actually inserted a smart copy of verses on his bedmaker's sister, in one of the weekly chronicles. Mr. Pope wheeled about with a significant look to lady Mary, and returned the whisper by saying, "I think indeed, madam, that "Mr. Welbank does not seem to know a great "deal of the world.

One of the statesmen seeing Tom rather disconcerted; kindly attempted to relieve him by expressing a surprise that so many learned men as composed the university of Oxford should seem so generally disaffected to the government. He observed, it was strange that learning should ever lean to the side of tyranny; and hinted, that they could never fall into so gross an error, if instead of poring perpetually over the works of the antients, they now and then took a cursory dip into the history of England. There was a justice in this remark which poor Tom being unable to answer, was at a considerable loss to



withstand; however, thinking himself obliged to say something, he ran out in praise of all the antient historians, and concluded with a compliment to the good sense of the university in giving them so proper a preference to the flimsy productions of the moderns. The nobleman turned away with disgust, and it was the general opinion of the table, that Tom would make a pretty fellow when he knew a little more of the world.

The deduction which I would make from the foregoing little narrative is, that people before they think themselves acquainted with the world should endeavour to obtain a general knowledge of men and things, instead of narrowly drawing their notions from any one profession, or any particular circle of acquaintance; they may perhaps laugh at all the world, but all the world will be sure of laughing at them; and the general ridicule of every body is much more alarming than the private derision of any one.

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NUMB. LXXVIII. *Saturday, July 24.*

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**N**OTHING is more commonly met with in the world than an affectation of liberality where people are notoriously narrow in disposition; and where captivated with the charms of a generous behaviour, they even force the natural littleness of their tempers into some awkward act of reluctant benevolence.

I supped last night, in consequence of a pressing invitation, at the house of a gentleman near  
Pall-

Pall-mall, who is always endeavouring to establish a character for generosity, though there is scarcely a circumstance in which he does not manifestly betray the avaricious cast of his temper, and expose himself to the contempt of the very person upon whom he endeavours to confer an obligation.

There were eighteen of us at supper, but not the sign of a petticoat in company: our eatables were remarkably elegant: the table was covered with every expensive rarity of the season, and I do not suppose the expence could be less from the variety and cost of the dishes, than ten or a dozen pounds. Yet notwithstanding so much magnificence on one side of the question, our liquor consisted of no more than two bottles of four port, a little jar of Welch ale, and a small bowl of brandy and water: as for lights, though the room was very spacious, we had no more than an humble pair of tallow eights to the pound, which were almost lost in a couple of superb candlesticks, which the master of the house with an air of negligence informed us, were a great bargain, and had cost him no more than an hundred guineas at Mr. Grimstead's, the great toyshop near St. Paul's.

For my own part, there are few people who drink less claret and burgundy than myself, or who indeed indulge themselves less in any extraordinary freedoms with the glass. When a young man I never considered intoxication as an appendage to gentility; and now that I have advanced pretty far into the vale of years, I should look upon the smallest excess to be unpardonable. A grey-headed drunkard is to me a character no less of abhorrence than contempt:  
since

since he must indeed be the worst of all profligates, who jests with the mandates of his maker, while he stands tottering on the very verge of eternity. Notwithstanding this declaration, I must acknowledge myself extremely displeased with the mixture of parade and parsimony, which was conspicuous in our entertainment. I expected at least that matters would have been of a piece; and really wished, that a little part of the profusion which appeared at supper, had been spared to furnish a tolerable bottle of wine for the conclusion of the evening.

Next to the great art of regulating our appearance either at home or abroad by the standard of our circumstances, nothing is so sure of maintaining us on a respectable footing with the world, as a constant uniformity in our dress and entertainments. Should we see a knight of the garter with his ribband across a livery coat, or perceive a man in an embroidered suit of velvet with a dirty pair of worsted stockings, our ridicule would be very naturally excited, and half the boys in town would probably hoot after the first as a fool, or the latter as a madman. In like manner those who give fifty covers at an entertainment, should make a proportionable figure in the choice of their wines; and those for ever avoid burgundy and champaign, who treat with nothing more than a simple veil cutlet, or an humble beef stake.

One of the most extraordinary mixtures of parsimony and parade, whom I ever remember to have known, was poor Jack Greedy; Jack made it a constant point to take four box tickets in public company, for the late Mr. Ryan's benefit, declaring his high regard for the character  
of



of that worthy man, but always demanding the odd shilling out of the guinea. If any of his friends wanted a sum of money, he never scrupled to lend it without interest, though at the same time he teized them everlastingly with what it would produce in the funds. No gold did he ever give in charity, but what was considerably deficient in weight: and once when he made his borough a present of a town clock, he charged the corporation with the carriage from London. Thus doing things continually by halves, and destroying, with a perpetual attention to the merest trifles, all the merit which he gained from the distribution of large sums, he sunk into universal contempt, and squandered away the principal part of his fortune to procure the character of a miser.

His neighbour, honest Will Frankly, was a man of quite a contrary temper, though possessed of scarcely half his fortune, by doing things with a good grace, he obtained more applause from the disposal of a shilling, than the other did from a gift of fifty pounds. There was something generously unostentatious about him, that gave the smallest act of benevolence an air of dignity; and by never seeming to demand the admiration of his friends, he was always certain of enjoying it. To Mr. Greedy the village gave nothing more than a distant bow of unwilling respect; but to Mr. Frankly they were officiously forward to pull off their hats, and gazed at him till he was out of sight, with an air of visible satisfaction. Upon the whole, they were two striking proofs of the wise man's observation, that he who does a good action merely for the sake of virtue is always sure of that applause  
from



from the world, which the ostentatious man constantly loses, by aiming to raise his own reputation:

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NUMB. LXXIX. *Saturday, July 31.*

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**T**HERE is a sentiment in Mr. Coleman's comedy of the Jealous Wife, with which I am not a little pleased, as it is no less an indication of a benevolent heart than a sound understanding. Harriet reproaching young Oakley on account of his extraordinary attachment to the bottle; the lover sensibly struck with the justice of the reproof, exclaims that were all ladies alike attentive to the morals of their admirers, a libertine would be an uncommon character.

Indeed if we take but ever so slight a view of the sexes, we shall find the behaviour of the one to depend so entirely upon the opinion of the other, that was either to set about a reformation, the amendment of both would be easily affected, and those virtues would be immediately cultivated through the prevalence of fashion, which neither the force of conviction, the dread of temporary misfortune, nor the terrors of everlasting misery, are now sufficient to steal upon our practice, even while they engage our veneration.

As the ladies in general are more affected by the prevalence of immorality than the men, it often surprises me, that they do not endeavour to look those vices out of countenance among  
ours

our sex, which are so frequently fatal to their own tranquillity. A man, through the establishment of custom, considers it as infamous to marry a prostitute, to connect himself with a drunkard, or to pay his addresses to a woman whose lips are continually fraught with indecency or execration; though accustomed himself to the midnight excesses of the stew, yet when he fixes for life, he enquires into the character of his mistress, and prosecutes his suit in proportion as she is eminent for her virtues. Her follies he readily laughs at, but overlooks by no means the smallest want of reputation. Whereas the lady, though bred up all her life in the strictest delicacy, expresses no repugnance whatsoever to venture with the most public betrayer of innocence, the most open enemy of mankind, and the most daring defier of his God. Nay, unless he has been in some measure remarkable for the number and blackness of his vices, she holds him in contempt, and sets him down as an absolute idiot, if he is not intimately conversant with every thing that can either lessen him as a christian, or degrade him as a man.

What, however, is most extraordinary on these occasions, is the facility with which a father usually contracts his daughter to a libertine; as if because custom did not involve her in the infamy of his character, his habitual propensity to vice must not necessarily endanger her happiness. For my own part, I am shocked when I see a parent less regardful of a daughter's felicity, than attentive to the welfare of a son. Is there a father who would persuade his son into a marriage with a prostitute professed? I hope not; why, then is his daughter so relentlessly sacrificed

ficed to a libertine? Is there not as much danger for the one to be miserable with her husband, as the other to be wretched with his wife? And since the natural claim to paternal indulgence is equal between each, must it not be highly inequitable to treat the first with such an excess of unmerited partiality?

I am insensibly led into this subject from a perusal of some sermons, addressed to *young women*, which have lately made their appearance, and were yesterday put into my hands by my bookseller. Who the author is I know not, but he deserves the greatest encomiums, for the perspicuity of his stile, and the energy of his arguments; he is elegant without levity, and pious without affectation. In one of his discourses, where *female virtue* is the object of consideration, he gives so admirable a lesson to the sex on account of this unhappy approbation with which the very best women so frequently honour a profligate lover, that I cannot but transcribe it for the benefit of my amiable readers.

“ How common is it to see young ladies, who  
“ pass for women of reputation, admitting into  
“ their company, in public places, and that with  
“ visible tokens of civility and pleasure, men,  
“ whom the moment before they saw herding  
“ with creatures of infamous name!—Gracious  
“ God, what a defiance to the laws of piety,  
“ prudence, character, decorum! what an insult,  
“ in effect, to every man and woman of  
“ virtue in the world! what a palpable encouragement  
“ to vice and dishonour! what a desperate  
“ pulling down, in appearance, and with  
“ their own hands, of the only partition that divides  
“ them from the most profligate of their  
“ sex!



“sex! between the bold and the abandoned  
“woman there may still remain, notwithstanding  
“such behaviour, a distinction in the world’s  
“eye; but we scruple not to declare, that religion,  
“purity, delicacy, make none.

“To return from this digression, if it be one,  
“we will allow it possible to put cases wherein  
“no particular rules of discovery, no determinate  
“modes of judgment, will enable a young  
“woman, by her own unassisted skill, to discern  
“the dangers that lie in her way. But can a  
“young woman be justly excused, or can she  
“fairly excuse herself, if, where all is at stake,  
“she calls not in the joint aid of wise suspicion,  
“friendly counsel, and grave experience, together  
“with prayers for God’s protection more  
“than ordinarily fervent?

“But, methinks, I heard some of you ask with  
“an air of earnest curiosity, Do not reformed  
“rakes then make the best of husbands? I am  
“sorry for the question, I am doubly sorry,  
“whenever it is started by a virtuous woman. I  
“will not wound the ear of modesty by drawing  
“minutely the character of a rake: but give me  
“leave to answer your enquiry, by asking a  
“question or two in my turn. In the first place,  
“we will suppose a man of this character actually  
“reformed, so far as to treat the woman he marries  
“with every mark of tenderness, esteem,  
“fidelity; and that he gives up for ever his old  
“companions, at least as to any chosen intimacy,  
“or preference of their company to hers. We  
“grant it possible; we rejoice when it happens.  
“It is certainly the best atonement that can be  
“made for his former conduct. But now let  
“me ask you, or rather let me desire you to ask  
“your



“ your own hearts, without any regard to the  
“ opinions of the world, which is most desirable  
“ on the score of sentiment, on the score of  
“ that respect which you owe to yourselves, to  
“ your friends, to your sex, to order, rectitude,  
“ and honour; the pure unexhausted, affection  
“ of a man who has not by intemperance and  
“ debauchery corrupted his principles, impaired  
“ his constitution, enslaved himself to appetite,  
“ submitted to share with the vilest and meanest  
“ of mankind the mercenary embraces of har-  
“ lots, contributed to embolden guilt, to harden  
“ vice, to render the retreat from a life of scan-  
“ dal and misery more hopeless; who never laid  
“ snares for beauty, never betrayed the innocence  
“ that trusted him, never abandoned any fond  
“ creature to want and despair, never hurt the  
“ reputation of a woman, never disturbed the  
“ peace of families, or defied the laws of his  
“ country, or set at nought the prohibition of  
“ his God;—which, I say, is most desirable, the  
“ affection of such a man, or that of him who  
“ has probably done all this, who has certainly  
“ done a great part of it, and who has nothing  
“ now to offer you, but the shattered remains  
“ of his health, and of his heart? How any of  
“ you may feel on this subject, I cannot say.  
“ But if, judging as a man, I believed, what I  
“ have often heard, that the generality of women  
“ would prefer the latter, I know not any thing  
“ that could sink them so low in my esteem.  
“ That he who has been formerly a rake may  
“ after all prove a tolerable good husband, as  
“ the world goes, I have said already that I do  
“ not dispute. But I would ask, in the next  
“ place, is this commonly to be expected?

“ Is

“ Is there no danger that such a man will be  
 “ tempted by the power of long habit to return  
 “ to his old ways; or that the insatiable love of  
 “ variety, which he has indulged so freely, will  
 “ some time or other lead him astray from the  
 “ finest woman in the world? Will not the  
 “ very idea of restraint, which he could never  
 “ brook while single, make him only the more  
 “ impatient of it when married? Will he have  
 “ the better opinion of his wife’s virtue, that he  
 “ has conversed chiefly with women who had  
 “ none, and with men amongst whom it was a fa-  
 “ vourite system, that the sex are all alike?—But  
 “ it is a painful topic. Let the women who are  
 “ so connected make the best of their condition;  
 “ and let us go on to something else.”

The scanty limits of my paper will not allow me to make as large an extract from this benevolent writer as I could wish. But I am the more easy on that account, as I dare say the generality of my readers, from the foregoing little specimen, will look upon his works as a very valuable addition to their libraries.

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NUMB. LXXX. *Saturday, August 7.*

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**T**HOUGH I have more than once in the course of my little animadversions, endeavoured to explode the preposterous custom of toasting, yet I have within this week met a circumstance which has, if possible, encreased my aversion to the practice, and in a manner compelled me to resume the subject, however tedious the repetition may appear to some of my *bon-vivant* readers.

I dined accidentally a few days ago at a well-known coffee-house in the Strand, at the pressing request of my nephew Harry, who assured me that the company would be highly to my taste, for though the most of them were young fellows, yet there were very few by whom they were surpassed either in politeness or understanding. This assurance, joined to the regard which I always entertain for my boy's conversation, induced me to give a very ready acquiescence, and it is no more than justice to acknowledge, that Harry had not over rated the merit of his friends, notwithstanding the latitude of the foregoing character.

Unhappily, however, just as we were circulating our jokes with the utmost good-humour, two or three gentlemen belonging to the army, who were intimately acquainted with some of our company, and overheard us from an adjoining room, sent in their compliments, and begged permission to join us, if we were not engaged  
about



about any particular business. This request was urged in too polite a manner to be refused, and we accordingly sent word how much we thought ourselves obliged by so friendly a proposition. The addition to our company scarcely took place, when one of the most manly and sensible characters I ever conversed with, made his appearance pursuant to a promise which he had given to my Harry, attended by two young gentlemen, his sons, the eldest of whom did not seem to be quite eighteen. As the stranger carried a considerable degree of consequence in his very looks, he was received with a suitable respect, and conversation began to circulate even with an additional share of life, when our harmony was illiberally interrupted by a toast from one of the gentlemen in red, no less offensive to good sense, than repugnant to good manners. I stared with an equal mixture of surprise and indignation; but there was no describing the situation of Harry's friend, or the distress of the modest youths who accompanied him. The father seemed totally abashed at the company into which he introduced his sons; and the sons utterly unaccustomed to so licentious an example, were quite unable to hold up their heads; they sunk with confusion as if they had actually given an offence, instead of having received one; till entirely at a loss how to recover themselves they sensibly withdrew, and left the grown gentlemen to indulge themselves with ill-breeding and obscenity.

Among the numberless absurdities which, in this happy country, are kept up among our men of sense, the custom of confining vice to the ages of discretion is one of the most extraordinary.

nary. A person now-a-days is not allowed to be a profligate till he arrives at one and twenty; as if, in proportion to the encrease of his understanding, he was to act diametrically repugnant to the principles of decency and virtue. An uninformed stripling must by no means, either presume to swear, or talk smuttily; his father will correct him severely for the licentiousness, and he will be looked upon with contempt or abhorrence by all his acquaintance. The father himself however may utter the most shocking blasphemies, and ransack the stews for the reddest obscenities of a brutal imagination. He is old enough to know the profligacy of the practice; and is sensible how offensive it is both to politeness and religion, to the laws of his country, and the ordinances of his God.

I have been often surprised that in a nation which values itself so justly upon the character of its good sense, there should be still such palpable remains of barbarity; what can be a greater reflexion either on our morals or our breeding, than the custom of driving our wives and children out of the room immediately after dinner, and telling them we are going to begin a conversation which is utterly improper for their ears. Shall men, who pretend either to manners or to virtue, enter upon such discourses as are dangerous to their children, or shocking to their wives! shall it be said that a child is not to be trusted with his own father, for fear of being corrupted; nor a woman permitted to enjoy a social hour with her own husband, for fear of some palpable affront.—Yes it must be said—yes it must be mentioned to the everlasting disgrace of the civilized people of England, that  
they

they are utterly unable to pass an evening without the most infamous indulgence of obscenity and execration; and that the happiness of their convivial entertainments is always estimated in proportion, as they debase the dignity of their understandings, and violate the mandates of their God.

A very laudable association has been lately set on foot in several places of this kingdom, to raise the wages of our honest servants, and to abolish the inhospitable custom of making our friends continually pay for their entertainment. Infinitely would it be to the honour of those gentlemen who so generously exert themselves in the cause of hospitality, if they also stood up in defence of true politeness and real virtue. Dissipated as the present age is, a few examples would produce an universal reformation; and I dare be bold enough to affirm, that the purposes of rational festivity would be much better answered, should such a regulation happily take place; when men begin to throw off decency, they soon throw off all esteem for one another; and few retain any regard for their friends, when they wantonly sacrifice every consideration for themselves. Whereas by an observance of good-breeding we should always maintain our friendships, and enjoy what Pope finely calls

*The feast of reason and the flow of soul,*

Where we are now filled with disgust, or sunk into all the excesses of brutality.



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NUMB. LXXXI. *Saturday, August 14.*

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*To the* BABLER.

S I R,

I KNOW few subjects more written upon and less understood than that of friendship; to follow the dictates of some, this virtue, instead of being the asswager of pain, becomes the source of every inconvenience. Such speculatists, by expecting too much from friendship, dissolve the connexion; and by drawing the bands too closely, at length break them. Almost all our romance and novel-writers are of this kind; they persuade us to friendships which we find impossible to sustain to the last; so that this sweetner of life under proper regulations, is by their means rendered inaccessible or uneasy.

It is certain the best method to cultivate this virtue, is by letting it in some measure make itself. A similitude of minds or studies, and even sometimes a diversity of pursuits will produce all the pleasures that arise from it. The current of tenderness widens as it proceeds, and two men imperceptibly find their hearts warm with good-nature for each other, when they were at first only in pursuit of mirth or relaxation. Friendship is like a debt of honour, the moment it is talked of it loses its real name, and assumes the more ungrateful form of obligation.

From hence we find that those who regularly undertake to cultivate friendship, find ingrati-  
tude

tude generally repays their endeavours. That circle of beings which dependance gathers round us is almost ever unfriendly ; they secretly wish the terms of their connection more nearly equal, and where they even have the most virtue are prepared to reserve all their affections for their patron only in the hour of his decline. Encreasing the obligations which are laid upon such minds only encreases their burthen ; they feel themselves unable to repay the immensity of their debt, and their bankrupt hearts are taught a latent resentment at the hand that is stretched out with offers of service and relief.

Plautinus was a man who thought that every good was to be bought by riches, and as he was possessed of great wealth, and had a mind naturally formed for virtue, he resolved to gather a circle of the best men round him. Among the number of his dependants was Musidorus, with a mind just as fond of virtue, yet not less proud than his patron. His circumstances, however, were such as forced him to stoop to the good offices of his superior, and he saw himself daily among a number of others loaded with benefits, and protestations of friendship. These in the usual course of the world he thought it prudent to accept, but while he gave his esteem he could not give his heart. A want of affection breaks out in the most trifling instances, and Plautinus had skill enough to observe the minutest actions of the man he wished to make his friend. In these he ever found his aim disappointed, for Musidorus claimed an exchange of hearts, which Plautinus soliciting by a variety of other claims could never think of bestowing. It may be easily supposed that the reserve of our

poor proud man was soon construed into ingratitude, and such indeed in the common acceptation of the world it was. Wherever Musidorus appeared, he was remarked as the *ungrateful man*; he had accepted favours it was said, and still had the insolence to pretend to independance. The event however justified his conduct. Plautinus by misplaced liberality at length became poor, and it was then that Musidorus first thought of making a friend of him. He flew to the man of fallen fortune with an offer of all he had; wrought under his direction with assiduity; and by uniting their talents both were at length placed in that station of life from which one of them had formerly fallen.

To this story taken from modern life, I shall add one more taken from a Greek writer of antiquity. Two Jewish soldiers in the times of Vespasian had made many campaigns together, and a participation of danger at length bred an union of hearts. They were remarked throughout the whole army as the two friendly brothers; they felt, and fought for each other. Their friendship might have continued without interruption till death, had not the good fortune of the one alarmed the pride of the other, which was in his promotion to be a General under the famous John, who headed a particular party of the Jewish malecontents. From this moment their former love was converted into the most inveterate enmity. They attached themselves to opposite factions, and sought each others lives in the conflict of adverse party. In this manner they continued for more than two years, vowing mutual revenge, and animated with an unconquerable spirit of aversion. At length, however,  
the



the party of the Jews, to which the mean soldier belonged, joining with the Romans, it became victorious, and drove John with all his adherents into the temple. History has given us more than one picture of the dreadful conflagration of that superb edifice. The Roman soldiers were gathered round it; the whole temple was in flames, and thousands were seen burning alive within its circuit. It was in this situation of things that the now-successful soldier saw his former friend upon the battlements of the highest tower, looking round with horror, and just ready to be consumed with flames. All his former tenderness now therefore returned; he saw the man of his bosom just going to perish; and unable to withstand the impulse, he ran spreading his arms, and crying out to his friend, to leap down from the top, and find safety with him. The friend from above heard and obeyed, and casting himself from the top of the tower into his fellow soldier's arms, both fell a sacrifice on the spot; one being crushed to death by the weight of his companion, and the other being dashed to pieces by the greatness of his fall.

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 NUMB. LXXXII. *Saturday, August 21.*


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*To the* BABLER.

SIR,

**T**HE generality of young women when once they get a lover in their heads, imagine that their relations are the most cruel creatures in the world, unless they give an immediate consent to every absurdity of their inclinations, and bestow them at once with a considerable fortune upon the sweet fellow who has thus happily made himself master of their affections. If a parent pretends to any authority, he instantly, from a tender father is looked upon as an absolute tyrant; and pretty miss very dutifully wishes him fifty fathom under ground, that she may have a handsome sum of money to throw away upon a rascal, whom she has not possibly known above a month or six weeks.

I am, you must know, Mr. Babler, a miserable woman, whom a partiality of this nature for a most infamous villain, has plunged into the deepest distress. About five years ago, Sir, I lived with my father, a beneficed clergyman in the north of England, and had every reason to be satisfied, that the happiness of the venerable old gentleman's life was placed in mine, from the excessive tenderness with which he constantly treated me, and from the enjoyments of which he debarred himself, merely to lay up a fortune  
for

for my advancement in the world. I was his only child; and though my mother died while I was quite an infant, he never would alter his condition, for fear, as he kindly expressed it, he might place a very different sort of woman over his poor Isabella.

I had scarcely turned my twenty-first year, Mr. Babler, when a company of strolling players came into our neighbourhood, a principal of which being an excellent scholar, and master of a very genteel address, had a letter of recommendation to my father, from a brother clergyman in the last town where they exhibited. My father, who was benevolence itself, though he did not greatly approve of such a guest, nevertheless desired him out of compliment to his friend to stay dinner, and assured him of his best services whenever the benefits came to be advertised. Mr. Villars, the comedian, thanked him in a handsome manner, and we soon after sat down to table, where the designing hypocrite, by a behaviour the most specious and polite; and by an unassuming pretence to all the virtues with which he was utterly unacquainted, soon got the better of my father's reserve, and not a little silenced the contempt which I had always entertained for those itinerant dependants on the theatre. Not to be minutely circumstantial, suffice it, Mr. Babler, that Villars received an invitation no less warm than general to our house, and in less than a week made such good use of my father's hospitality, as entirely to captivate the affections of his inexperienced daughter, and to fill her with an insuperable aversion to the happy habitation, in which for her whole life she had been so carefully brought up.



I was too much a novice, however, in the business of amour, to keep the matter so perfectly concealed from the eyes of a father, who in his youth had been remarkably well received among the ladies, as I could wish: he saw with what eagerness I hung upon every syllable that fell from Villars, and remarked with concern, that unless Villars was in the house I studiously avoided his company. One Sunday afternoon, therefore, while I imagined he was at church, he unexpected darted from a closet in the very room where Villars and I were exchanging vows of everlasting fidelity; and ordering my lover with a look of indignation never to come again into his presence, desired me immediately to retire to my room.

Though shame and confusion kept me silent in the presence of my father, I was nevertheless no sooner alone, than I began to think his behaviour a very unjustifiable piece of barbarity: all the care and anxiety which for more than twenty years he had manifested for my welfare, was immediately banished from my remembrance. I looked upon him as the greatest enemy I had in the world; and full of nothing but the idea of my adorable Villars, I determined, like the inconsiderate, the unnatural monster I was, to quit the man who gave me being, who educated me with the nicest circumspection, and of whose worth I was perfectly convinced; to go off with a fellow, who for ought I knew might be a highwayman; to whom I never owed an obligation; and whose person I had never seen till the week before, in which he so unfortunately brought a recommendation to my father's.

Before

Before I had time to execute this dutiful project however, my unhappy father came up to my room, and looking at me for some time with an air of inexpressible anguish, at last burst into a flood of tears. When he had somewhat recovered himself, "O Isabella, said he, little did  
" I think to have seen such a day as this; and  
" little did I imagine you would ever give me  
" cause to regret the hour of your birth. In  
" what part of my duty, tell me child, has there  
" been a deficiency to occasion so fatal a negligence in yours? What has your father done,  
" that you wish to shake off every sentiment of  
" nature and affection; and desire to fly from  
" the arms which have cherished you since the  
" first moment of your existence, to refuge with  
" a villain, whom you have not known above  
" ten or a dozen days. In the alienation of your  
" affections, has he hesitated to break the sacred laws of friendship and hospitality, or  
" scrupled to put on the awful form of virtue to  
" prosecute the most infamous ends? While I  
" entertained him with the greatest cordiality,  
" he was doing me the most irreparable injury;  
" and when I harboured him most in my bosom,  
" like the venomous adder, the more deeply he  
" stung me to the heart. And will you, Isabella,  
" instead of revenging the cause of so injured,  
" and I hope I may say, so tender a parent, become yourself accessory to the destruction of  
" my happiness; will you be guilty of a parricide to reward an assassin, who has attempted  
" more than my life; and shall it be said that  
" a common place compliment to her beauty is  
" of more consideration to so sensible a young  
" lady than the everlasting tranquillity of her fa-

“ther? Alas, my child, let not your youth and  
“inexperience lead you into an irretrievable  
“mistake. The man that would be guilty of a  
“crime to engage your affections, would not stop  
“at a crime to cast you off, when time and pos-  
“session had rendered you less attractive to his  
“imagination. Consider my dear, the man who  
“courts you to quit your father’s house, is inte-  
“rested in his solicitations. I cannot be inte-  
“rested. He wants you to gratify his *own* pur-  
“poses; whereas I have no end to answer but  
“the advancement of *your* felicity, and am will-  
“ing to contract every enjoyment of my life, for  
“the sake of building that felicity on a perma-  
“nent foundation. As I am determined never  
“to lay a restraint upon your inclinations,  
“weigh well the advice I have given you. You  
“are now a woman by the laws of the land, and  
“your person is at your own disposal: if there-  
“fore to-morrow morning, after having ma-  
“turely considered the affair, you can sacrifice  
“your doating father, for this inhospitable vil-  
“lain, pack up your cloaths and every thing  
“else which belongs to you; go and favour him  
“with your hand at the altar of that God who  
“sees into the bottom of my afflictions, and do  
“not incur the additional disgrace, of an infam-  
“ous flight from a house in which you have  
“been treated with such a continued excess of  
“paternal indulgence. Remember, however,  
“if such should be your resolution, that I am  
“no more your father; in humble imitation of  
“the Deity, by whom I hope to be forgiven,  
“I here offer you a chearful forgiveness for what  
“is past. But if you persevere, know that tho’  
“my humanity may weep for your transgression,  
“that



“that my justice will never permit me to reward it.”

My father after this desired me to recollect, that I was far from being destitute of admirers, that three or four young gentlemen of agreeable persons, unexceptionable character, and handsome fortunes, had for a considerable time paid their addresses; and that consequently I could not have even the ridiculous plea of being *neglected*, to palliate my attachment for the object whom I had so preposterously distinguished by my choice. Saying this he left me with an air of dejected resolution; and taking his horse rode off a few miles to the house of an intimate acquaintance, where he lay that night, as if he was unwilling to throw the shadow of an impediment in the way of my determination.

It is no easy circumstance to describe the situation of my heart at this behaviour of my father's: he convinced my reason, but at the same time he alarmed my pride; and I absurdly imagined, that it would be a derogation from my own dignity if I offered to make him the least concessions, after he had thus indirectly commanded me to quit his house. Presumption is always the daughter of indulgence; where children have been treated with an excess of tenderness, they most commonly think it very insolent in a parent if he happens to tell them of any little mistake; and are wonderfully ready to expect a most punctual performance of his duty, however remiss they themselves may be in the discharge of their own. Unhappily for me, I was one of these hopeful children; accustomed to nothing but the heart-directed blandishments of paternal affection, I could not bear the accent of reproach,

tho' conscious of its being merited; and thought that my father should have made me a submissive apology; though it certainly would have done me the greatest credit if I had fallen at his feet, and implored his forgiveness with a torrent of tears.

While I was thus agitated between the sober remonstrances of my reason, and the unnatural workings of my pride, Villars, who had waited at a little alehouse in the neighbourhood, to watch the motions of our family, no sooner saw my father's back, than he boldly came up to the house, and prest me in the most passionate manner to embrace that opportunity of packing up my little all and escaping from the tyranny of a man, who made no other use of his authority than to render me perpetually miserable.—  
“Parents, my charming Miss Brandon, (said  
“the artful villain) imagine they do mighty  
“things if they give a young lady a decent room,  
“a tolerable gown, and treat her now and then  
“with a box at the theatre; this they call an  
“excess of tenderness, and think a very meritorious discharge of their duty; but see the  
“strange inconsistency of their characters; tho'  
“they so readily allow her to please herself in  
“little things, yet they absolutely deny her a will  
“in the most material article of all, and permit  
“the mere amusement of an hour, with no other  
“view but to claim such an authority over her  
“inclinations as may render her miserable for  
“life.” These sentiments, Mr. Babler, joined to the fascinating importunity of the fellow, did my business completely; I set about packing up my cloaths and trinkets in an instant, and in less than two hours was entirely out of sight, glowing  
ing

ing all the way with a revengeful sort of satisfaction, to think how mortified my father must be when he found I had so chearfully taken him at his word.

As it would not be prudent for Mr. Villars to stay in the neighbourhood when our affair became any way public, we quitted the country with the utmost expedition, and by the following evening arrived at a considerable town near an hundred miles off, in which a strolling company was at that time performing, from whom Mr. Villars had received several very pressing letters, requesting him to join them, and offering him by much the most capital cast of all the characters. At this place we were married the morning after our arrival; and to my everlasting infamy I mention it, no one reflexion of what might be felt at home, was once suffered to discredit the festival with a sigh.

I had not however been many weeks married before I found a very material alteration in the behaviour of my husband; instead of the good humour and complaisance which he formerly assumed, he treated me with nothing but a round of the most silent surliness, or the most sarcastic contempt. If he talked sometimes, it was of having thrown himself away; and in proportion as our circumstances became contracted, for the players had but very little business, and the principal part of my wardrobe was now disposed of, he was base enough even to reproach me with running away from my father. I now saw when it was too late, the imprudence of my conduct, and would have given the world had I been mistress of it, to call back the days of my former tranquillity. I perceived clearly that Villars's sole  
motive



motive in ever addressing me, was the consideration of my father's opulence; he saw me an only child, and naturally imagined, that though the venerable old gentleman might be offended with me at first, he would nevertheless quickly relent, and take me again to the arms of his affection, as a daughter. With this view he obliged me to send home letters upon letters, all expressing the deepest penitence for my fault, and painting the wretchedness of our situation in colours the most affecting. A post scarcely went for several weeks, but what carried some petition of this nature; and perhaps I might have continued writing considerably longer, had not the following note been at last sent, in answer to my various epistles.

To Mrs. Villars, at the Theatre in Shrewsbury.

MADAM,

“ WHEN I had a daughter, she never spoke  
 “ a word but what gave me pleasure, nor  
 “ mentioned a want which I did not fly to re-  
 “ prove: you, Madam, have robbed me of that  
 “ daughter; yet after the barbarity of plunging  
 “ a dagger in my bosom, are now mean enough  
 “ to throw yourself at my feet, and to solicit my  
 “ compassion for bread. In reality, I do not  
 “ know whether I should most detest you for the  
 “ inhumanity of your conduct on the one hand,  
 “ or despise you for the baseness of your beha-  
 “ viour on the other: is it not enough to be  
 “ guilty, but you must try to be despicable? For  
 “ shame, Madam, exert a little more spirit and  
 “ be

“ be uniformly culpable : talk as much of duty  
 “ and affection to your husband as you please ;  
 “ but let not the heavy hand of necessity squeeze  
 “ you into a paltry affectation of either, to a fa-  
 “ ther, about whose heart you have twisted a  
 “ thousand scorpions, and who probably before  
 “ you receive this may be ready for that grave  
 “ which you kindly opened for him on the sixth  
 “ of August. Trouble me I beseech you no  
 “ more, I am familiar with your hand, and shall  
 “ never open another letter of your writing ; as  
 “ you have disposed of your person, give me  
 “ leave to dispose of my property ; for be as-  
 “ sured, no consideration on earth shall tempt  
 “ me to provide for a villain, or to mitigate the  
 “ punishment which providence has in this world  
 “ pronounced against filial disobedience. Could  
 “ you abandon a father, and yet hope for felici-  
 “ ty ? could you rise up against the fountain of  
 “ your Being, and yet form an idea of content ?  
 “ The very supposition is a blasphemy against  
 “ heaven. Make therefore a proper use of your  
 “ present chastisement, and rather rejoice at it  
 “ as an happiness, than lament it as a misfor-  
 “ tune ; since had you escaped the indignation  
 “ of omnipotence in this world, there was but  
 “ too just a foundation to expect an eternity of  
 “ torments in the next.”

### HORACE BRANDON.

This letter, which my conscience convinced  
 me was what I ought to have expected, putting  
 an end to all our hopes, Mr. Villars no longer  
 kept measures with me ; he wanted money :  
 money

money he would have; and even told me in very plain terms, I might that very night put him in possession of fifty guineas if I would.—  
O, Mr. Babler, his proposal was a horrid one. A young Gentleman of great fortune had it seems praised me to his face; and knowing perhaps his character, taken the liberty of—I cannot enter into an explanation — You may judge, Sir, with what a degree of united rage and astonishment, any woman must have heard such a circumstance from the husband of her heart. For my own part, though I had forfeited all pretensions to the filial character, I was yet tremblingly alive in all my other relations. I received the overture therefore with the indignation it merited; and Mr. Villars, finding that neither the most soothing language of hypocrisy, nor the most vehement arguments of a horsewhip were sufficient to alter my resolution, he privately decamped in a few nights after, leaving me in a strange country, not only without a six-pence, but over head and ears in debt; and in a situation also that required the tenderest circumspection. This was too much; it brought on the pains of parturiency, and I was delivered of a boy, who happily for himself poor Orphan, died in a few hours after his birth. For me I languished a long time in the most deplorable circumstances, and must have inevitably perished, had it not been for the humanity of the company, who notwithstanding their own distresses were extremely urgent, nevertheless strained a point to relieve mine; and when my health was somewhat established enlisted me at a full share, though I had never before appeared in any thing but Isabella, in the innocent adultery.

In



In this way of life, Sir, I have ever since continued, not knowing how to better myself; was my heart at ease I might possibly entertain you with some very humourous little narratives. But alas, Sir, remorse is the only companion of my bosom. My unhappy father who did not survive his letter three days, is ever present to my remembrance; and even Villars greatly as he is the object of abhorrence of my reason, now and then draws a tear from my tenderness, and gives me a moment of distress; he has for these four years been strolling with a company in various parts of the American Plantations, and is lately married to a woman infinitely better calculated for his purposes than the

*Unfortunate Isabella.*

**NUMB.**

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NUMB. LXXXIII. *Saturday, August 28.*

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*To the* BABLER.

S I R,

**Y**OUR unfortunate correspondent Mrs. Villars, at the conclusion of her letter in your last paper, gave an intimation, that if her heart was any way at ease she could amuse the public with some curious adventures of a strolling Company; now; Sir, that your readers may not be disappointed of such an entertainment, I have taken the liberty to send you the following little narrative; and shall not, through an ill-timed affectation of modesty say, you will confer a great obligation on me by giving it an immediate place.

By some such unhappy attachment as Mrs. Villars, I became, about three years ago, a Member of a Strolling Company in the west of England, and as my voice was tolerably good, my person not disagreeable, and my passion for the stage not a little vehement, I made a very capital figure in all the country towns of our circuit, and shone away every other night as a Juliet, a Monimia, an Eudofia or a Statira. To be sure it was often whimsical enough to see a heroine of my consequence in distress for a pair of stockings, an odd ruffle, or a tolerable cap. Yet the novelty of the profession, and the greatness of my applause, very readily induced me

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me to overlook all difficulties ; add to this likewise, that I possessed the invaluable society of the amiable vagabond who undid me, a circumstance of itself sufficient to compensate for every other inconvenience or misfortune.

My first appearance, Mr. Babler, was in the character of Cordelia in king Lear. My husband performed the part of Edgar, and our theatre, which was little better than a large barn, was remarkably crowded against the time of representation. The universal approbation which I met with at my very entrance, gave me spirits to go on in the part with tolerable propriety ; and had it not been for an unexpected accident or two, the piece would in general have been pretty well personated. The first cause of complaint was given by the lady who played the part of Goneril ; it seems this illustrious princess was violently afflicted with a weakness of her nerves, and this unfortunate disorder obliged her to make frequent application to a certain underbred potable called gin, an additional quantity of which, as *'the tincture of sage'* was not then in existence, she generally took, *'to fortify herself against the terrors of an audience.'* Unluckily, however, this medicine always disappointed Mrs. Torrington in its operation ; instead of removing her complaint, it constantly increased her infirmity, and rendered her sometimes scarcely able to utter an articulate syllable. This was the case the above evening ; and nothing could be more diverting, than to see a staggering princess upbraiding the intemperance of her father's followers. The barn, I beg pardon, the house, was in an absolute roar all the time of her performance ; which her Majesty



Majesty conceiving to be rather the shout of contempt than the voice of approbation, she advanced with a haughty step to the edge of the stage, and in a language little suited to the dignity of her character, stammered out, 'That it was no unusual thing for a woman to be overtaken a little; and that she warranted many of the conceited B--ch--s who were patched up in the boxes, could drink double the quantity she had taken, and therefore need not turn away their faces with such an air of insolence.' Whether her efforts to make this excellent elegant harangue occasioned any agitation at her stomach, or whether nature of itself was determined to throw off the load with which it was oppressed, is not my business to determine; but to the everlasting stain of the drama I am obliged to acknowledge, that her oration was not half a minute pronounced, before it was attended with such a disagreeable discharge upon the two fidlers, who composed our entire band of music, as reduced them to the necessity of making a precipitate retreat; and made it absolutely proper for two lords, a candle snuffer and journeyman barber, to carry off the queen by force, to her own apartment.

The confusion occasioned by this unlucky accident was just beginning to be removed, when a fresh affair arose that excited, if possible, a still stronger laugh of ridicule from the audience. Mr. Grandison, (for all our strolling players are very fond of sounding names) who performed the part of *Gloster*, and was reckoned one of the best studies in the company, depending too much upon the goodness of his memory, found himself at a dead stand in the most essential

essential part of his character. Till his eyes were put out no man could be more perfect ; but this melancholy sentence had no sooner taken place, than he was obliged to beg permission to read the remainder of his character, and not easily finding this remarkable line,

*Alack I have no eyes.*

there was no restraining the merriment of our auditors ; a thousand jokes were incessantly cracked upon every one who appeared, so that we were fairly obliged to drop the curtain in the middle of the fourth act ; and forced to spin out the evening's entertainment with the Mock Doctor, Mr. Pope's prologue to Cato, and a double hornpipe.

There are a number of infatuated young people, Mr. Babler, who because they see what an easy appearance the performers of the London Theatres generally make, are idle enough to suppose that the very meanest stages of an itinerant actor must afford at least a tolerable maintenance. But alas, Sir, abstracted from the continual contempts to which the profession is liable, there is not a more miserable way of getting bread in the universe ; I have many nights played Calista for two-pence halfpenny ; and sometimes after exhausting my spirits perhaps as a Tragedy Queen for a whole night together, have returned home to a wretched little room in an alehouse, and there, without having a morsel for my supper, been obliged to buck up my only shift in the wash-hand basin, and to get a part of twenty lengths by heart against the next night of performance.

In

In all these mortifying scenes the wretched itinerants are under a necessity of assuming a contented aspect, and putting on an air of the utmost life, when perhaps they are absolutely perishing for bread. Forced in the decay of business to beg a little credit from chandlers-shops or alehouses, they are continually subject to insults from the meanest members of the community; and even if matters answer their amplest expectations, the despicable shifts which they must try to make a benefit, are insupportable to any mind which retains the least trace of spirit or sensibility. As for the men they must court an acquaintance with the lowest journeyman artizan, and spend their time in the most dreadful of all employments, the amusement of underbred ignorance and brutality: as for the women, they must patiently hear the pert solicitations of the veriest little prentice of a country town; and submit to the infamy of an imaginary prostitution, even where they have virtue enough to avoid the reality. Let your young readers, Mr. Babler, seriously think on these circumstances, and then I hope few, especially of the softer sex, will ever think of embracing so despicable an employment. I am, Sir, &c.

MARIA OSBALDISTON.

NUMB.



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NUMB. LXXXIV. *Saturday, September 4.*

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**I**T is a privilege with the greatest number of those people who entertain a high notion of their own wit, to rail for-ever at the only institution upon which the happiness of all Society is founded ; and to pour out an incessant torrent of ridicule upon poor matrimony, though they owe their own existence to the establishment of that sacred ordinance. The motive indeed which the generality of our Libertines assign for this aversion to marriage is, that the rite is a restraint upon all their other enjoyments, and that the moment a man devotes himself to one woman, that moment he is obliged not only to alter the former tenor of his conduct, but to put up with every petulance of the lady's temper, however unreasonable she may be in her requests, or however arbitrary she may be in the exercise of her authority.

For my own part, though I have hitherto continued an old batchelor, I have yet seen but few women who rule with an improper authority over their husbands ; nor can I entertain any high notions of the man's understanding, who once makes it a doubt whether or no he should be able to maintain that connubial pre-eminence in his own family, which he receives from the hand of reason and the custom of his country. If he possesses but a dawn of sense, the object of his choice will be such as can give him no cause to apprehend any turbulence of disposition ; and  
if

if he possesses but a dawn of spirit, he will always have it in his power to prevent any disagreeable exertion of it, even in case he should be unhappily deceived.

The pleasantest argument of all, however, is the necessity which a married man is under of forsaking all those enjoyments, which while he was a batchlor created the principal part of his felicity. Yet surely if those enjoyments are repugnant to reason, the sooner he forsakes them the better, since it never can be too early a period to regain the paths of discretion and virtue; and if they are not opposite to the dictates of prudence, he must be a very pusillanimous fellow indeed, who could once dream of giving them up. In fact, those men are always for finding fault with the poor women, who are conscious of imperfections in themselves; whereas men of sense being determined to proceed on a rational plan, are constantly desirous of doing justice to the merit of the ladies, and never preposterously suppose that they are destitute either of benevolence or understanding.

The general run of our Libertines, though they are much too sensible and much too spirited to put up with any impropriety in the behaviour of a worthy woman, nevertheless submit with the greatest chearfulness imaginable to any treatment which a woman of the Town thinks proper to give them, and bless their stars with a kind of rapture that they are not husbands:— This is in plain English, they rejoice that they are not obliged by the laws of their country to bear a merited reproach from the lips of a deserving wife, though the narrowness of their minds and the baseness of their spirits, can induce them  
so

so readily to put up with the most impudent airs of a despicable strumpet, and to crouch with an infamous servility at her feet.

Sam. Squander is a melancholy proof of this assertion: Sam at the age of twenty came into an affluent fortune, and launched into all the licentious dissipations which generally captivate young men of opulent circumstances. Fearful that his pleasures, if folly and vice may be called pleasures, would be manacled by the filken bands of wedlock, he declared himself an early enemy to marriage, and has continued to this hour, when he is near as old a fellow as myself, without even wishing to taste the sweets of a domestic felicity. Yet though averse to an honourable connection with the sex, he could not exist without some feminine attachment; attentive therefore to the mere gratifications of sense, he singled out a favourite nymph from the purlieus of Drury-lane, took her publicly to his house, and has cohabited with her now above thirty years. A more ungovernable termagant probably never lived; yet Sam is quite happy he is not married. She has more than once been detected in an amour with his footmen; but what of that, Sam put it up, she was not his wife. If she throws a glass at his head, which is sometimes the case, or confines him within doors for a fortnight, it is no matter, Sam is still happy, and laughs at any of his acquaintance who go home at twelve o'clock, for fear of making their wives uneasy, by a longer absence from their families. One thing indeed makes him miserable, he has two sons by this infamous woman, of whom he is passionately fond, and the reflexion that his estate must go into another line for want  
of



of a legitimate offspring, is a circumstance which renders him constantly unhappy, even in his fortunate state of batchelorship: so that I believe if the truth were known, Sam is secretly of opinion with me, that a good wife is the first of all the human felicities; and that the greatest of all fools is he who puts up with the numberless vices of a profligate woman, through a fear of meeting some natural imperfections in a woman of intrinsic merit and character.

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NUMB. LXXXV. *Saturday, September 11.*

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*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**T**HE ingenious Mr. Percy in the preface to his edition of old ballads, declares it as his opinion, that nothing indicates the nature of the times more strongly than the composition of those songs which are in every body's mouth. Should what he advances upon this occasion be generally allowed, I am very much afraid that the present *anno domini* would come in for a very despicable sort of a character. Our ballads for the principal part being so flimsy in their composition, and so dangerous in their end, that very few of them are fit to be taken up by any person either of delicacy or understanding.

In the infancy of English poesy, though the versification of our bards was naturally rough and inharmonious, still the elevation of sentiment, and morality of design which breathed through

through all their compositions, rendered them always passable, and frequently entertaining and instructive. But in these politer times when every man is either a critic or a poet, sentiment and design are equally disregarded: so a little smoothness in the numbers, and a little chastity in the rhimes are attended to, we never once trouble our heads about entertainment or instruction; but go on through thirty or forty lines of luscious insipidity with the most perfect composure, as if the lyric walk of poetry was invented merely to stupify our feelings or to corrupt our principles.

The only subjects upon which our modern lyric poets ever think of exerting their talents are love and wine. When the stringer up of a love-song condescends to take the pen, he tells us that young Colin met with Chloe one May morning in the grove, and that there he pressed her to be very naughty, and offered her a bit of ribband as a reward for submitting to his infamous solicitations, but that the good girl not choosing to prostitute herself for such a trifle, Colin is so struck with the dignity of her virtue, that he marries her at once; and the delicate young virgin thinks it the greatest happiness in the world, to be the wife of a rascal who wanted to ruin her peace and blast her reputation.

If a modern ballad-writer indeed wants to be uncommonly arch and humorous, he goes a different way to work; he tells us that brisk Will the ploughman having long had a passion for Nell, the dairy-maid, he way-lays the girl as she is going to milk her cows, and finding that there is no possibility of arguing her out of her virtue, he seizes that by force which she refu-

ses to grant through favour, and very fairly ravishes her. Nell, who all her life before had been a girl of principle, instead of harbouring the least resentment against the villain for so infamous an outrage, bursts into a loud fit of laughing, acquaints him that all her former pretensions to virtue were nothing more than the result of affectation; and invites him with all the confidence of habitual prostitution, to a repetition of their guilty intercourse. The more bare-faced the indecency the more humorous we reckon the composition; and the prudent mama teaches it to her infant daughter, and inflames the opening imagination with the earliest description of that glowing connection of the sexes, which in a little time is but too likely to endanger both her happiness and her character.

The gentlemen, however, who celebrate the virtues of the grape, go still farther than the professed votaries of cupid: with all the stupidity of the love-song writers, they inculcate a greater share of immorality, and advise us no less to the utmost brutalities of intoxication, than to the utmost excesses of a libidinous sensuality. They teach us to think that the joys of futurity are infinitely unequal to the profligacies of the stew, and that we are raised into something equal with the Deity, when we have debased ourselves considerably lower than men.

It may perhaps be remarked on this occasion, that the song is much too inconsiderable a species of poetry to possess either entertainment or instruction, and that if it affords our musicians an opportunity of exerting the force of sound, it is all that can be reasonably expected. With the greatest deference, however, to the opinion of  
of



of such accurate critics as may argue in this manner, I shall only observe, that if this species of poetry is capable of being perverted to the purposes of vice, it is also capable of being turned to the interests of virtue. It does not follow because a poem is set to music that it should be destitute of decency or sentiment. Those sacred compositions which we sing in honour of the Deity however execrably we have seen them versified, are nevertheless fraught with instruction, and it is that instruction only which in their present miserable dress has rendered them any way tolerable. Of consequence therefore if a little good sense in our hymns does not disgrace the importance of the subject, it cannot possibly lessen those inferior productions which we compose for the business of social enjoyment and friendly festivity.

Inconsiderable as the composition of a song may seem upon it's first appearance, nevertheless when we reflect, that of all the different kinds of poetry it is what is most generally in our mouths, and consequently what is most familiar to our recollection, a man of any sense or benevolence cannot but regret to find it so generally prostituted to the purposes of folly or vice. The elegance of an air can by no means destroy the profligacy of a scandalous sentiment. The Music on the contrary is well known to give an additional energy to language, and many a young lady by habituating herself to hear the insidious addresses of a designing lover in verse, has been brought to countenance the most immediate applications of palpable prose; and led at last into an esteem of those principles by a song, which would have shocked her to the last degree had

they been first of all communicated in common conversation.

For these reasons therefore, I wish to see the lyric species of composition rescued from contempt, especially since it is a mortification to every gentleman of musical abilities, to be under a necessity of giving such an embellishment to the productions of vice or stupidity, as must not only greatly disgust his own good sense, but materially injure the morals of the public.

I am, Sir, &c.

CRITO.

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NUMB. LXXXVI. *Saturday, September 18.*

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**I**T has been justly observed by a very sensible writer, that there is nothing in the world which possesses more humility than pride; and nothing which induces us to make more unnecessary concessions to other people, than a desire of enhancing the importance of ourselves. This vanity leads us into a thousand absurdities, and not seldom into a number of vices; to expose it therefore shall be the business of the present paper, and if I can make but one reader a little ashamed of his low-minded exaltation, I shall do more essential service than if I had employed half a century in the more elegant purposes of that delicate amusement, where sober instruction is sacrificed to a prettiness of style, and the  
imagi-

imagination kept perpetually alive at the total expence of the understanding.

My nephew, Harry Rattle, called upon me yesterday, and told me, if I would pass the evening with him at the Cardigan Head, he did not doubt but what I should meet with a sufficient subject for a paper or two, as he was engaged in a party where there were to be some extraordinary characters. Having nothing very material on my hands, I assented to his proposal, and calling upon him about seven o'clock in a hackney coach, we went together to the tavern, where all his friends were already assembled, and good naturedly lamenting the want of his company.

The first person who attracted my observation was a young fellow of about thirty, dressed in regimentals, whom I found to be a Captain of Dragoons, and who, it seems, had raised himself from the humble station of a quarter master to the command of a troop, merely by the bravery of his behaviour in the celebrated battle of Minden. I had not been in company many minutes before I saw this gentleman entertained the highest notions imaginable of his own importance: when he spoke it was with an air of visible superiority; he assumed a dignity of look, and an indifference of accent, as if he conferred a prodigious favour in every syllable he uttered; and took care to lose no opportunity of informing us what a number of the first nobility he had the honour of ranking amongst his most intimate acquaintance. If any body differed from his opinion, he had canvassed the point with lord such a thing, but the day before; and as to secrets of a political nature, no man in the king-



dom knew more of the most private transactions of government. He had called upon a certain Earl in the morning, who let him into some matters of the first consequence ; and dined with a noble Duke, who assured him, that there would be no change whatsoever in the ministry. In short, let the conversation turn upon what it would, he bore down all opposition with some right honourable friend of his ; and thought it an unaccountable presumption, in any person who did not allow a nobleman's name to have more weight than an absolute matter of fact in an argument.

When Harry and I were returning home, he gave me the Captain's history in nearly the following words. " The Captain, says he, though  
" an honest and a brave man at bottom, is nevertheless such a compound of arrogance and  
" servility, that I am often at a loss to know  
" which he most deserves, our resentment or  
" our contempt. Originally bred in obscurity,  
" he conceives a sort of adoration for every man  
" with a title ; and to be admitted into the company of a Lord, is mean enough to put up  
" with all the insolence of coronated pride, and  
" even stoops to run on the most pitiful errands,  
" for the satisfaction of being reckoned among  
" the number of it's acquaintance. Yet this  
" assiduity to oblige the great is not sufficient to  
" preserve him even from their ridicule ; they  
" see from what trivial motive his attachment  
" arises, and treat him with more disrespect than  
" the lowest of their footmen, because they  
" know his pride will not suffer him, on any  
" account, to discontinue his attendance. Thus  
" his vanity defeats it's own purposes—Instead  
" of

“ of encreasing his consequence, it renders him  
 “ utterly despicable, and makes him no less a  
 “ jest to his superiors, than to those who are  
 “ merely on a footing with himself.”

“ That little man of whom you took notice of  
 “ in black (continued Harry) is also a dupe to  
 “ his own vanity, but that vanity is intirely of a  
 “ different sort ; he wants to pass upon the world  
 “ as a man of prodigious understanding ; and to  
 “ gain this important end, he is continually com-  
 “ mencing an acquaintance with every author  
 “ of reputation to whom he can get introduced,  
 “ from a strange supposition that his friends will  
 “ encrease their estimation of his abilities, in  
 “ proportion to the intimacy of such a con-  
 “ nection. It is incredible to think with what a  
 “ humility of deference he courts a man of let-  
 “ ters on this account. He praises him to the  
 “ skies in all companies, and repeats a poem  
 “ with the most fulsome adulation, even before  
 “ the face of the very author. An opinion of  
 “ his own he never pretends to ; nor does he  
 “ once presume to have a will in the most trifling  
 “ transaction—Pinning his faith entirely on the  
 “ sleeves of his literary directors, he squares his  
 “ religious principles by the writings of his theo-  
 “ logical friends ; and regulates what concerns  
 “ his health, by the productions of his physical  
 “ acquaintance. His taste he conforms to the  
 “ standard which is set up by the professors of  
 “ Belle Letters—And let that standard be ne-  
 “ ver so absurd, he adopts it for fear of being  
 “ discarded for the insolence of a dissent. In-  
 “ deed this complaisance often involves him in  
 “ no trifling difficulties ; for if two of the litera-  
 “ ti should happen to disagree, he is puzzled

“ how to act; if he takes part with one, he is  
“ sure of destroying himself in the estimation of  
“ the other, and it is no easy circumstance in  
“ such a case to conciliate the good opinion of  
“ both. I once knew (proceeded Harry) when  
“ two doctors of his acquaintance were called in  
“ to attend him in a fit of the gout—Each pro-  
“ posed a different method of treating his case,  
“ and neither would submit to the arguments of  
“ his competitor. In this dilemma he resolved  
“ to comply with the prescriptions of both;  
“ therefore, lapping up his feet in a rye poul-  
“ tice, according to the advice of one, he took  
“ an elixer which was recommended to him by  
“ the other, and was very near being carried off  
“ by the injudicious application of such opposite  
“ medicines. This, however, is not all—His  
“ conscience, like his health, is sacrificed to the  
“ mandate of the theologist in company. Hence  
“ he is by turns a Protestant and a Dissenter; if  
“ there happens to be more than one sect, he is  
“ a jumble of each; and sometimes, with a par-  
“ ty of Freethinkers, he has no religion at all.”  
From these little anecdotes (concluded Harry) we  
may easily see that nothing is so sure of render-  
ing us contemptible, as a ridiculous vanity of  
stealing a reputation from the consequence of  
others, especially where a goodness of heart,  
and an attention to the sentiments of modest  
plain sense, are so certain of building up the no-  
blest character for ourselves.



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NUMB. LXXXVII. *Saturday, September 25.*

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AS there are none of my readers for whose happiness I am more solicitous than the younger part of my female purchasers, I must now and then be excused, if I should write a paper wholly for their instruction; cut off from that general intercourse with the world, which the other sex too universally enjoy, they stand infinitely more in need of advice, and endued with an infinitely greater share of sensibility, they are more likely to retain it than the men, who look upon the finer feelings as a kind of disgrace to their spirit, and imagine that the least regard to the sentiments of any body else is the greatest insult that can possibly be offered to their own understandings.

It is with no little indignation, that I frequently hear the capacity of the ladies ridiculed by the wits of the other sex; and even find that the gravest of our modern writers look upon an enlarged education, rather as a prejudice than benefit to the most beautiful part of the human creation; for my own part, I can by no means see how cultivating the mind can be in the least prejudicial to the morals; nor discover how a woman can be rendered more unfit for the management of a family, by acquiring an additional share of knowledge and discretion. I readily grant, that a female pedant is of all pedants the most intolerable, and that nothing is so likely to disturb the judgment as a superficial acquaintance,

tance, either with the languages or the sciences; but a progressive and well grounded instruction in the useful parts of literature must always be productive of benefit, and must always give an equal encrease of understanding to either of the sexes.

Notwithstanding this declaration however, there is one branch of education, which even the wits themselves think the ladies cannot attain too early, that I wish with all my heart was delayed till they arrive at years of discretion, and began to form notions of the world with some little degree of propriety. I the more readily express this wish, because the protraction of the branch I allude to, can by no means be prejudicial, either to their interest, their morals, or their capacities. The part of education which I am here so desirous of keeping a considerable time from the ladies, is nothing more than the knowledge of writing; I do not know that a young woman has a greater enemy in the world than an inkstand, and many a parent who boasts of the rapidity with which his daughter now improves in the art of writing, may in a year or two have a very lamentable motive for wishing that she never learned to write at all.

A young woman now-a-days, let her be never so homely, scarcely reaches her fifteenth or sixteenth year, but what some body takes an opportunity of pouring the fascinating language of adulation into her ear; and it rarely happens that this somebody is the person, who if a treaty of marriage was proposed, would meet with the approbation of her family: naturally credulous at so early a period, the most distant compliment is actually set down as a positive declaration, and

the man is exalted into a *first love*, as it is called, for behaving with little more perhaps than an ordinary share of civility: the consequence therefore generally is that an amour ensues, and the place of personal interviews is supplied by a literary correspondence; Miss, while her doating relations suppose that she is reading some pious meditation, is most devoutly employed in the composition of darts and daggers to her Strephon: and setting her imagination on fire with the thoughts of a husband, when her infatuated father believes that her very motion, to use the language of the poet, *blushes at itself*, and is certain, that she would sink into the earth, if a man was to look her in the face with any extraordinary degree of steadiness. A girl at sixteen is most commonly as desirous of being thought a woman, as when a woman of forty, wishes to be a girl of sixteen. Attentive to nothing but the impulse either of her passion or her vanity, the *dear creature* of a man probably receives half a dozen letters a day, till his vanity blazes the matter about, and her deluded parents find their lovely little innocent has very vehement desires under all that specious veil of simplicity; and burns for the possession of a bed-fellow, notwithstanding all her terrors, if a man but accidentally comes into her company.

In reality a woman of this country has very few occasions for the art of writing, but to carry on a literary correspondence; and this correspondence is always begun so very early, and directed so very injudiciously, that it is generally unhappy in the end. A woman can have no occasion to correspond with a lover, who meets the approbation of her family, and nothing can be more impru-



imprudent or dangerous than to correspond with a man who does not ; but besides the imprudence and the danger of writing to young fellows, there is a disgrace always attending such a circumstance, which I am surprized does not more frequently deter a lady from committing the indiscretion. The men, however, just in their engagements with one another, are most commonly unjust in their connection with the other sex ; the glory of being esteemed by an amiable woman is too much to be concealed ; a bosom friend, must be trusted with the important secret ; and this bosom friend has *his* confidant, with whom it must of course be deposited ; so that while the unsuspecting fair one believes her reputation is carefully locked up in the bosom of her adorer, she is the general subject of conversation with fifty other fellows, and is profligately jested with perhaps in half the taverns of the kingdom. Many a sensible woman when she has reached two or three and twenty, has blushed for her epistles of sixteen ; and sickened when she has married a man of intrinsic worth, at the bare recollection of the power which some rascal may possibly possess of exposing the weakness of her earlier years. For these reasons therefore, I cannot but think that a hasty introduction of a girl to paper and pens, is as injudicious a measure as a parent can fall into. She can at any time get a messenger to carry a letter, when fear or shame will prevent her from applying to any person to write one ; if therefore parents would be a little more attentive in teaching their daughters to read and spell with propriety, than anxious about the goodness of their hand-writing, they

they would improve their minds considerably more, and keep them from a number of temptations which often prove too powerful both for their pride and their virtue.

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NUMB. LXXXVIII. *Saturday, October 2.*

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THERE is no supposition more absurd, than that which is generally made by the world in favour of learned men; a profound scholar, we imagine, must of course be a person of uncommon wisdom; and the more his head is fraught with unnecessary knowledge, the more we encrease in our veneration of his abilities. Learning however is a thing widely different from wisdom; a man may be deeply versed in all the mysteries of a classical erudition, and yet at the same time scarcely possess a grain of common understanding; whereas on the contrary, he may be master of an excellent judgment without knowing a single syllable of Greek or Hebrew; and be able to manage the most intricate concern, though he has never seen so much as the eight humble parts of speech in Lilly or Whettenal. That knowledge in fact is most useful, which is best calculated to carry us through the world with ease and reputation; and as learning itself was instituted for no other purposes, we must allow that it fails of attaining its most salutary views where it is merely employed in the vain pursuits of a ridiculous parade, or an idle speculation.

Indeed

Indeed if there was no commerce whatsoever to be carried on between mankind, and if there was no necessity for the scholars of an academy ever to make an essay on the great stage of life in the parts of men, it might be right enough to breed our children up in a total ignorance of all worldly affairs; but when, as I have just hinted, it is with the professed intention of enabling them to appear with a tolerable grace in this important theatre, that we give them an education, nothing surely can be more preposterous, than to employ them entirely in those studies which render such an appearance additionally difficult, and give them rather a disgust than an inclination to put on their respective characters.

These reflexions I have been insensibly led into by recollecting some anecdotes of my poor friend Dick Thornhill, of St. John's, in the University of Cambridge. Dick being in possession of a very pretty fortune, used to console himself prodigiously whenever he heard any body talk about the stocks, that none of his money was employed in the business of Government. He imagined, that in proportion to the encrease of these political barometers, the burden of the subjects were encreased; and believed, that instead of receiving so much per cent for the use of his property, he actually paid so much for having it protected. In this sensible manner he still continues to go on, and laughs very heartily at the fools, as he calls them, who wantonly throw away such prodigious sums of money, merely that others may take care of those affairs, which he says, they can manage so very easily themselves.

I was



I was standing a few days ago at the shop of a second-hand bookseller in a populous part of this metropolis, where I often meet with an odd volume of some antiquated author, and have sometimes the pleasure of seeing my own works rusting in all the peaceable dulness of the most perfect obscurity: the bookseller, agreeable to the practice of his trade, has his various old volumes classed into different arrangements, and at the head of each the price is affixed, to avoid being pestered with the questions of occasional purchasers. My old friend Dick happening accidentally to come up—he made a full stand, and being struck with the appearance of a thick octavo which lay under the fourpenny catalogue, he asked the man if he would take a shilling for that book, to which the conscientious shopkeeper answering in the affirmative, he marched off with an air of visible satisfaction, and I suppose thought he had met with a very tolerable bargain.

The pleasantest story however, which I have heard for a long time of my old friend, was one which was mentioned to me yesterday evening at the coffee-house; Dick it seems the day before was going through Clare-market, where, accidentally struck with the sight of a nice shoulder of lamb, a joint of which he is particularly fond, he asked a good woman to whom it belonged, what was the price of it, she answered six groats; “six groats, (returned Dick a little peevishly) “do you imagine, mistress, that people pick up “their money in the streets? six groats indeed! “at one word I will give you half a crown for “it;” well, Sir, (replied the woman) I will not haggle with a customer; so taking the half crown,

crown, she tossed the lamb into a basket, and sent it to Dick's lodgings, who plumed himself not a little upon his address as a market-man. Mr. Thornhill, notwithstanding all this, is a very excellent scholar, few young fellows ever left the University with greater credit than himself. But unhappily poring over the customs of Greece and Rome, when he ought to have made some little acquaintance with the manners of his own country, he is as much a stranger to the common transactions of life, as if he had been bred up to the present moment in a wilderness! and was now let loose upon the world for the mere entertainment of society. Unable to converse with any company but those who, like himself, are elevated on the awkward stilts of a merely classical education, he despises every body who is not a proficient in the dead languages; and in return, meets with nothing but the general aversion of the people whom he treats with this general contempt. Upon the whole, his very best friends pity his total ignorance of the world, and lament that so honest a fellow as he is, in the main, should be such a torment to himself, such a trouble to every body else, and such a useless member of society. In short, if it were possible for him to change all his learning for the experience of the barber's boy who attends him, they think he would be a considerable gainer by the bargain; though this poor fellow is the constant object of his ridicule, and one of the people whom he incessantly bandies about with significant sentences of Greek and Latin from some of his favourite authors.

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NUMB. LXXXIX. *Saturday, October 9.*

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**W**ALKING in the park a few mornings ago with my nephew Harry, a gentleman of a very prepossessing appearance came up, and shaking Harry with the utmost cordiality by the hand, insisted upon his going to dine with him, with a friendly sort of peremptoriness; and in a manner extremely polite, begged the favour of my company. As I found Harry accepted the invitation readily, I bowed my assent to it likewise, and after taking a turn or two more, we set out for the gentleman's house, in the neighbourhood of Great George-street, and amused ourselves in his library, which was judiciously furnished, till the summons arrived for dinner, about four o'clock. We were then conducted to an elegant dining room, where we found an excellent family dinner, and where I had the honour of being introduced to a most amiable young lady, whom I took to be the sister of our host, but who, upon an enquiry, I found to be unhappily no less than his daughter.

I say unhappily no less than his daughter, because I am perfectly of opinion with the late excellent Mr. Richardson, that a gay young fellow of eight or nine and thirty, is a very improper person to be the father of a young woman of eighteen or nineteen. Full of life and levity himself, he is unable to pay a proper attention to the felicity of his child; and if he chances to be a man of the town, like my nephew's friend, he  
treats



treats her in a manner that must either excite her continual detestation, or destroy that purity of principle, which only can lay a solid foundation for the establishment of her future happiness and reputation.

Mr. Medlicot, the gentleman with whom we dined, piques himself, as he is so juvenile a father to so grown a young lady, upon behaving to her as if she was no relation whatsoever, and is never so happy as when a stranger at any public place, seems to take him for one of her admirers; during the time of dinner, he enjoyed my misconception excessively, and heard me once or twice say *his sister*, without offering to rectify my mistake. This however I could have cheerfully over-looked, had not his conversation, even before the servants, been of a nature so extremely indelicate, that there was scarce a possibility of sitting at table. An odious round of the most palpable *double entendre* was frequently offered to our attention; the nocturnal excesses of which he had been guilty the last week, were related with an air of triumph; and he even went so far as to mention the name of some celebrated courtezans, with whom he had the honour of an acquaintance.

All this time the poor young lady sat in the most mortifying state of distress; cut to the very soul of her sensibility, yet unable either to retire, or to mention how greatly she was affected with this intolerable behaviour of her father. My Harry, however, took the very first opportunity of relieving her; for, the moment the cloth was removed, he begged Mr. Medlicot would shew us the fine hunter which he had purchased a few days before, from a noted dealer in Yorkshire.

Mr.

Mr. Medlicot, as proud of shewing his horse, as desirous of parading his daughter, immediately complied with the request; and the young lady retired with a look of complacency at Harry, which sufficiently testified how much he had obliged her, by procuring her so fortunate a release from her father's company.

Harry supping with me in the evening, I could not help expressing my wonder, that a young fellow of his good sense and delicacy, should continue the least correspondence with so shameless a profligate as this Mr. Medlicot. "An indecency of conversation in any man, says I, is always as sure a sign of a little understanding, as of a vulgar education: and nothing ought to give a generous mind more offence, than where we see the modesty of a virtuous woman insulted, by any of those infamous obscenities, which your bucks, and such like despicable fellows, imagine to be the criterion of spirit and vivacity; but when a libertine is so dead to all sensibility as to wound the ear of his own daughter with a grossness of this nature, we are filled with horror as well as with indignation, and cannot help considering him as a monster, who would even violate her honour himself, did not a latent fear of the world restrain the licentiousness of his shocking imagination, and happily confine him to mere innuendoes, and simple gesticulations."

"Your observation, my dear Sir, (returned Harry) is perfectly just, and I ought to blush at ever visiting such a man as Mr. Medlicot, unless I had some other design than merely to possess his company. But you must know, that this fellow, unless he is particularly engaged

“ gaged abroad, always makes it a rule to en-  
“ gage a friend or two to dine with him every  
“ day; and if by any accident he should happen  
“ to be disappointed, he traverses the park, as  
“ he did this morning, to pick up an acquaint-  
“ for the credit of his table. By this means  
“ it often happens that poor Hortensia his daugh-  
“ ter is exposed to the heaviest torrent of licen-  
“ tious ribaldry; and obliged to sit out many a  
“ conversation, which would appear scandalous  
“ in a Covent Garden tavern. Medlicot piques  
“ himself upon a knowledge of the world, and  
“ treats every appearance of female delicacy, as  
“ a monstrous affectation. He has found many  
“ fools among the sex, and this has given him a  
“ preposterous opinion of the whole; therefore,  
“ to maintain his character as a knowing one, he  
“ uses his own daughter with the same disre-  
“ spect that he uses every other woman, and  
“ thinks it adds to the reputation of his under-  
“ standing, to put of all appearance of necessary  
“ decorum and parental partiality. It is for com-  
“ mon fathers he thinks to behave with common  
“ discretion; but young fellows like him, who  
“ are acquainted with life, should be above such  
“ a weakness; as the only way he thinks to pre-  
“ serve the obedience of a daughter, is to shew  
“ your sensibility of her sex’s imperfections.  
“ Hortensia, who has an amiable mind, and a  
“ fine understanding, is unspeakably afflicted at  
“ this behaviour; and always rejoices when I  
“ take a dinner with them, as I constantly invent  
“ some excuse or other to set her at liberty.  
“ This is the only reason of my acting with  
“ common civility to Medlicot, as he is a man  
“ for whom I entertain the most sovereign con-  
“ tempt.



“tempt. Would you believe it, he keeps two  
“women in the very same house with his daughter;  
“and these worthy ladies often take it in  
“their heads to find fault with Hortensia, and  
“even complain to him that she will not treat  
“them with a sufficient share of respect. Matters,  
“however, if I have any penetration, cannot long  
“go on in this manner, for Hortensia has been some  
“time courted by a very worthy baronet of fortune;  
“but Medlicot having an aversion to become a  
“grandfather yet a while, has absolutely refused  
“his consent; and in the most illiberal terms,  
“accused the young lady of amorous inclinations.  
“Notwithstanding this, they carry on a private  
“correspondence, as I have good grounds to believe,  
“and perhaps the next moon-light night may see  
“the young couple on their journey to Edinburgh.  
“May this I say, be the case; and may every father  
“who follows the steps of Medlicot, be rendered  
“equally contemptible, and become equally disappointed  
“in his expectations.”

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NUMB. XC. *Saturday, October 16.*

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*To the BABLER.*

S I R,

**T**HOUGH there are few qualifications which afford us so general a satisfaction as an agreeable voice, yet there are few things which give us so general a disgust as the universal propensity which every body has to sing, without recollecting the judgment of their company, or considering the scope of their own abilities. This observation, Mr. Babler, I had but too much reason to make yesterday evening, at a meeting of some friends who had particularly assembled on purpose to pass three or four hours with a degree of more than ordinary pleasure and festivity: our party, Sir, was carefully selected; and there was not a single man in the room but what could hold a toast, give his sentiment, or sit up all night with a country candidate at a contested election.

The royal family had scarcely gone round, Mr. Babler, when Dick Thompson was called upon for a song, who accordingly prepared to oblige us, and in an instant struck up the celebrated air in Arne's opera of Artaxerxes,

*Water parted from the sea.*

This, however, he executed in a manner so very execrable, that it was with the utmost difficulty  
the

the whole company could keep from laughing in his face: we all of us sat upon thorns till he was done, and either picked our noses or bit our nails till the complimentary bow at the conclusion happily released us from so uneasy a situation. Nevertheless every body honoured him with a plaudit; and Dick really assumed as much dignity in his look, as if he had performed to a miracle.

The next person singled out was Kitt Turner; a young fellow with a voice quite of a different cast from Mr. Thompson's, and well enough adapted for the softer species of songs, where there is no extraordinary number of shakes or divisions. Kitt unhappily, regardless of the walk in which he could actually make a tolerable figure, attempted *the School of Anacreon*, and strained his little lungs to so unconscionable a degree, as rendered him utterly unable to give us any thing else the remainder of the evening.

When Kitt had concluded, he called upon Tom Nelson; who offered us *the Soldier and the Sailor*, provided we suffered him to accompany this delightful composition with the music of a pewter dish. As Tom's principal motive was to entertain, no-body could be rude enough to dissent from his proposal, and a pewter dish was therefore ordered up stairs, which Mr. Nelson kept spinning on the table all the time of his song, occasionally lessening or encreasing the velocity of its motion, according as the different movements of the tune rendered such a circumstance necessary.

Fired with the approbation which was bestowed upon the pewter dish, the moment it  
came



came to Will Webly's turn, he chalked the back of his hand in two or three places, and rubbing it in two or three other places with a piece of burnt cork, he got up, and placing his hand against a particular part of the room, roared out, *an old Woman cloathed in grey*, working his fingers in such a manner as to raise some faint idea of an antiquated face; this was considered as a high stroke of humour, and produced no less than a solo on the tongs, a concerto on a pair of bellows, and Handel's water-piece on the salt-box. The various performances, Mr. Babler, lasted a considerable time, and every body seemed to be pleased, though in fact it was no way difficult to see that every body was secretly dissatisfied and disappointed. For my own part, I never was more uneasy in a company since I knew what a company was, and took an opportunity of stealing away about two o'clock in the morning.

It is in reality not a little odd, Mr. Babler, that people who are acquainted with their own deficiencies in point of voice, do not, when they are called upon among their friends, give such a song as is most naturally suited to their compass; what business has a fellow who can scarcely get through a plain derry down tune, to think of meddling with a difficult Italian air; or what necessity is there for a man who never saw a gamut in his life, to aim at executing a piece of music which actually calls for a performer of the most capital abilities?

The generality of people when they hear a song in our theatres which happens to hit their fancy, are constantly endeavouring to retail it  
among

among their acquaintance, without ever considering, that notwithstanding all the advantages of an exquisite voice, and a consummate musical knowledge, the performer who sings it, may scarcely be able to go through it with a sufficient share of delicacy or judgment. A man, however, who would escape ridicule, ought to consider that those songs may be to the last degree intolerable from him, which in Vernon would almost drag the theatre down with acclamations; and next to the merit of making himself pleasing, he should remember that the greatest proof of good sense is not to render himself disagreeable: on which account, therefore, those who have but plain voices ought to stick to plain songs; since instead of gaining any reputation by an attempt to soar beyond their proper powers, they will do nothing more than offend the ears of every company they go into, and draw an everlasting smile of derision upon themselves.

It would also be judicious in those ladies or gentlemen who occasionally oblige their friends with a song, if as well as taking care not to meddle with any difficult pieces of music, they likewise took care never to meddle with a song where they were not perfectly acquainted with the words. How often have I heard a delicious morsel of poetry most barbarously mangled, through the inattention of a negligent singer; and every grammatical institute inhumanly butchered, through the want of a little recollection. Sorry am I to add, that I have most generally observed these imperfections among the ladies; and have frequently conceived a disgust to a very passable face, merely because the possessor was so totally unacquainted with English.

At some other opportunity, Mr. Babler, perhaps I may again trouble you with a scrawl, for the present I believe I have given you enough, and therefore shall only add that,

I am, &c.

C R I T O.

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NUMB. XCI. *Saturday, October 23.*

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**A**S happiness is the pursuit of every body, it is not a little surprising that so few of us arrive at this universal goal of human desire, and still more surprising that when we see the various quicksands upon which the expectations of others have been shipwrecked in steering to this favourite point, that we are not a little more cautious in the direction of our own course, especially as something more than a temporary felicity rests upon our attention, and the transports of a future life immediately depend upon the rectitude of our conduct in this.

The principal reason why the generality of the world are disappointed in their search after happiness, seems to me to be that strange infatuation of placing our highest felicity in objects which are either weak or vicious in themselves, and which consequently our reason upon a sober consideration must either despise or detest.—A man whose utmost wishes are centered in the luxuries of a fashionable table, must be miserable the moment he is incapable of emptying another plate: he who has no other comfort in life than his bottle, must be robbed of his summum



num bonum the instant he is stretched upon the floor; and he whose desires are absorbed in still greater sensualities, must be equally unfortunate the moment those desires have been indulged; in fact, every pursuit of this nature is rendered lifeless and insipid by its very gratification, till continual repetitions so deaden the appetite; (to say not a syllable of consequences) that experience makes us exclaim with the wisest fool that ever existed,

*"All is vanity under the sun."*

Were we however to make reason the guide of our actions, instead of being eternally directed by inclination, our enjoyments would always be certain; and recollection would afford us the most perfect satisfaction, instead of filling us incessantly with mortification and disgust; for in reality, if we think but ever so hastily on the affair, we shall find that no object can promise us the smallest glimmer of real felicity which is repugnant to the sentiments of virtue; it is from the rectitude of our conduct only that we are to look for any happiness at all; and surely when we give an unbounded loose to every depravity of inclination, it is a degree of absolute madness to expect the self-approving testimony of our own conscience to the very actions which that conscience cannot but highly discountenance and condemn.

The glittering noise, and pompous bustle of the world, may for a time perhaps lull the sentiments of reason, or cry "hush" to the pleadings of conscience, but can never entirely subdue either: in the moments of retirement the

most hardened of us all are dragged up in turn before the bar of our own minds, and the deity which presides there pronounces a just though a severe sentence on every breach of morality and virtue.—Callous as we endeavour to make ourselves, that sentence screws itself in the memory; clouds the eye amidst all the splendor of the drawing room; and harrows up the very soul in the warmest sunshine of a court. Where is the man who can say he has never acknowledged the omnipotence of conscience? Where is he who can affirm he has not, in the strictest sense of the expression, been condemned by the deity of his own bosom, and doomed to a temporary perdition in his mind? Stand out ye fashionable deniers of another existence; come forth ye daring blasphemers of your God—from the irresistible something, which acquits or condemns during this life in your breasts, learn to believe that there is a sovereign disposer of all things in the next, who will decide with an equal severity and justice; and that the power of the divinity which you experience so frequently below, is nothing but a faint resemblance of that authority, which at the dreadful day of account you must meet with above.

I am very frequently amazed (abstracted from every consideration of future happiness) that the mere dictates of self concern for the felicity of the present, does not generally induce us to follow such pursuits as are certain to give us a real satisfaction while they engage us; and sure in their consequences of establishing not only an increase of honest reputation, but a source of inconceivable content.—Was the libertine, instead of squandering thousands to destroy some unsuspecting

pecting innocent, to employ a fiftieth part of the sum in her protection—what a foundation would he lay for arriving at that goal, which his very greediness after happiness destroys in the contrary course?—Was the miser, instead of hoarding up useless millions, to expend a little of his wealth in wiping away the sorrows from affliction and distress; the action would be its own reward, and he would own that if he went to the proper market, happiness was to be purchased at a very reasonable price: in short, if mankind would consider that virtue and vice create their own heaven and hell even on this side the grave, the principal part of us would endeavour to act in such a manner as would enable them to look with confidence beyond it, and experience in this world some tolerable idea of that felicity which is prepared to await the righteous in the next.



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NUMB. XCII. *Saturday, October 30.*

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I HAVE often remarked that one half of the pleasures so eagerly prosecuted by the generality of mankind, if changed in their appellations, and ranked under the denomination of labour, would be shunned with as much assiduity as they are now followed, and rendered every whit as disgustful to the fancy as they are now flattering and agreeable. Through some unaccountable infatuation we are ravished in the literary sense of the expression, with the whistling of a name, and infinitely fatigue ourselves more in the bare pursuit of our several amusements, than in the closest attention to the duties of our respective vocations, though these evocations are the only means which we have of raising a necessary provision for our families.

The truth of this position was never more evidently ascertained than in the character of poor Bob Beetle. Bob is engaged in a very extensive way of business; and is, at once, the most lazy and the most industrious fellow alive: he is fatigued to death if he writes a few lines to a correspondent, but he will ride after a pack of dogs for a dozen hours together, and call it glorious sport, when he has ventured his neck over a score or two of gates, and come home as dirty as a ducked pick-pocket, from a forty miles chace in the middle of winter. When he is in town he complains of it as a prodigious hardship if he rises at ten o'clock in the morning, though in the country

country he makes no scruple whatsoever to get up at three or four to drag a fish-pond; and will scarcely walk a street's length to receive a hundred pounds in the way of his business, though he would trudge eight or ten miles with the greatest satisfaction after a brace of partridges. I met Bob a few days ago in the city, and stopping him on the privilege of an old acquaintance, demanded what was the reason of his seeming out of temper:—"Seeming (repeated he) Mr. Babler, it is more than seeming; I am half inclined to hang myself: here in such a roasting day as this must I trundle to Change, and broil for two whole hours under the intense heat of a perpendicular sun. Damn it, Sir, I lead the life of a galley slave, and it is better not to live at all than be liable to such continual anxieties." I was ill-natured enough to smile at his distress; but giving him a cordial shake by the hand, I wished him a good morning, and so we parted. Next day about twelve o'clock going to dine at a relations near Hammer-smith, who should I see stripped and playing at cricket in a field near Kensington, but Bob: though the weather was rather warmer than when I met him the preceding day, he was engaged in that violent exercise with all the appearance of a most exquisite satisfaction, and scoured after the ball with as much agility as he could possibly use to get himself into a heat on a frosty morning.

If we take but ever so slight a survey of mankind, we shall find that most people are actuated pretty much in the same manner with my friend Bob Beetle. Looking upon that as an insupportable toil which is most conducive to their

interest, they absolutely find a pleasure in fatigue, and run into downright labour in hopes of enjoying a little recreation. I would by no means be understood as an arguer against a moderate share of manly exercise or rational amusement: on the contrary, I look upon such relaxations to be essentially necessary, both because they add considerably to our health, and give us a fresh inclination of returning to the business of our various employments. What I am offended at is, to see men of excellent understandings in total opposition to the dictates of their good sense, applying themselves wholly to the prosecution of their pleasures, and creating a number of imaginary difficulties, to imbitter every moment which they set apart for the management of their most necessary employments.

Were temporal concerns, however, the only ones which we sacrifice to our idleness, nay to our most culpable, amusements, something still might be said in our defence; but our happiness hereafter, as well as our interests here, is obliged to give way to the meanest dissipations; and a fox chase or a cricket ball; a hunting-match or a dice-box, are not only able to stifle every impulse of regard which we ought to entertain for our families, but every sentiment of adoration which we ought to entertain for our God. The duties of religion, like our domestic concerns, are utterly neglected; and even the awful business of eternity is thrown aside, for a contemptible game at whist, or a despicable pack of hounds.

The parallel between the neglect of our temporal and spiritual concerns, will be found considerable stronger, when we recollect that where unavoidable necessity compels a momentary attention



tention to either, we enter upon them with an equal degree of reluctance and ill-will. But in the consequence, however, there is the widest difference: our disinclination does not often interrupt the business of our callings, while we continue in opposition to the natural bent of our tempers to carry it on; many a man though he hates his profession, nevertheless by subduing his antipathy to it, and managing his affairs with discretion, makes a good fortune; but let us be never so diligent in the discharge of our religious obligations, yet if our hearts are not actually engaged in the service of our Creator, all our personal attendance on his worship, will be so far from availing us, that it will rather encrease the enormity of our guilt, and expose us more inevitably to the thunders of his hand. Reluctance is an aggravation of our crime, and we become less and less excusable, the more we appear in his temple, unless we approach it with the most exalted fervency of inclination. Let us be careful, therefore, whenever we steal an hour from the elysium of our amusements, and condescend to enter a church, that we do not suffer so precious a part of our time to be lost. Let us take the greatest pains we are able to prevent that hour from being an evidence against us at the dreadful day of judgment; and consider in the language of the Poet;

“That unless we desist from our crimes;

“’Tis blasphemy surely to pray.”

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NUMB. XCHI. *Saturday, November 6.*

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CONVERSING yesterday with an old acquaintance on the vanity of human wishes, we fell insensibly into a long discourse about the absurdities of mankind, even in their best actions; and particularly dwelt upon the insolence of their very devotion, when, though they affect to submit themselves entirely to the resignation of providence, they nevertheless presume to point out immediate objects for the exercise of the Divine Benignity, without once recollecting that the nature of their request may be totally opposite both to the greatness of its wisdom, and the justice of its laws.

The subject of conversation possessed me so very much upon my going to bed, that it continued to employ my imagination, and I dreamt how Jupiter took me up to the skies, as he was said to have formerly done by Menippus the philosopher, in order that I might be convinced the accusations so generally brought against the equity of providence, were totally without foundation; and that the great author of the universe, notwithstanding the impious murmurs of his creatures, was perfectly just, and consistent in the minutest of his decrees.

Having taken my station, as I fancied, at the feet of the Deity, the chrystal gates of the celestial region were thrown wide open, and by a particular order of Jupiter, the softest whisper addressed to him from earth was so distinctly heard,

heard, that during the continuance of the various supplications, I never missed a single syllable.

The first who offered up his prayers to Olympus, was a man who had been ruined by being a security in a large sum of money for a very intimate friend. "This, (says Jupiter, turning "to me) is a fellow of unquestionable worth and "integrity; through the whole course of his "life he has paid so inflexible an attention to the "dictates of virtue, that I do not believe I have "any thing to charge him with, besides a human infirmity. He thinks it hard, therefore, "that I should suffer him to be plunged into "distress, though this distress is nothing more "than the natural consequence of his own indiscretion; for instead of building his esteem upon "the honesty of the man by whose means he is "thus unhappily stripped of his all, he founded "his regard entirely upon the length of their "acquaintance; and assisted him, not because "he was a person of probity and honour, but "because he was a person with whom he generally cracked a bottle in an evening, and "took a sociable pipe. On this account he is "justly punished for his folly; and though I intend to reward his virtues very amply in this "world, yet I must permit him to be chastized "below, that other worthy men may take warning by his example, and learn to shower their "favours upon those only whom they know to "be truly deserving."

The next person who offered up his petition, was a merchant in the City, who prayed devoutly for a fair wind, for a ship which he had richly laden in the river, and intended for a very valuable market on the coast of Africa. "Now  
"here



“ here (resumed Jupiter) is another very honest  
“ fellow, who will think himself particularly  
“ aggrieved if I decline to comply with his re-  
“ quest; and yet if I was to grant it, a thousand  
“ others would inevitably be ruined, who are  
“ bound upon voyages that require quite a con-  
“ trary wind. Your people of virtue imagine  
“ that they should in the minutest circumstance  
“ be the particular care of providence, and ab-  
“ surdly fancy that the attention of a Being,  
“ who has the whole universe to govern and  
“ support, should be entirely engrossed by them-  
“ selves. These people must however, be in-  
“ formed, that I am the God of an extensive  
“ world, and not the immediate patron of any  
“ one man. Of course, therefore, I shall never  
“ invert the order of things to oblige a private  
“ person, though that person should be the very  
“ best of all my votaries; more particularly too  
“ when let his merits be what they will, my fa-  
“ vour shall so incredibly exceed them in the  
“ end.”

After the departure of the Merchant, I thought  
a whole kingdom came at once, and begged of  
Jupiter to destroy a neighbouring nation with  
whom they happened to be at war. “ Here  
“ are precious fellows for you, (cried Jupiter)  
“ and so I must sacrifice a country of ten or  
“ twelve millions, merely because their con-  
“ scientious votaries think proper to make the  
“ request; that is in plain English, I must be  
“ their bully, and arm myself in passions, that  
“ would disgrace the meanest of themselves, for  
“ the mighty honour of executing the purposes  
“ of their revenge.” Jupiter upon this turned  
his head aside with indignation, and bid me ob-  
serve

serve another body of people, rather larger than the former, who were singing hymns to his praise, and invoking his favour with all the energy of the most solemn adoration. " This (says he) is the nation with whom my late set of worthies are at war; and you hear they are just praying in the same manner that I would be graciously pleased to cut the throats of all their enemies. Now which of these must I oblige? Their pretensions to my regard are alike insignificant; and they are quarreling for a tract of country in America, to which neither of them have the smallest right. To punish therefore, both their injustice to the poor Americans, and their insolence in thinking to make me an abettor of their infamous contention, I shall leave them entirely to themselves, and make each by that means the scourge of the others crimes." Jupiter delivered these last words in a tone so tremendous, that I awoke with affright; but recollecting the various circumstances of my dream, I thought it would make no indifferent paper, as it taught so absolute a resignation to the awful dispensations of God.

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NUMB. XCIV. *Saturday, November 13.*

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**H**YPOCRISY for the honour of the present age, is a crime so very little practised, that people are not at the trouble of concealing their follies or their vices, but generously run into the most palpable mistakes, or the most culpable errors in the full face of day; and even expect that we should look upon this exalted disregard of shame, as a mark of the highest candour and sincerity.

For my own part however, I should be glad if the generality of mankind were less ingenuous in this respect, since so open a commission of our faults must necessarily raise vice into a sort of reputation, and establish an example to the last degree prejudicial to posterity. Hypocrisy therefore so far as it regarded a concealment of our faults, I should look upon as a sort of negative virtue, because though it did not extenuate our own errors, it nevertheless prevented us from debauching the principles of other people.

The great misfortune of the present age is, that the universal force of example has rendered a number of the most atrocious crimes absolutely fashionable; formerly it was looked upon as infamous to the last degree, if a man alienated the affection of an acquaintance's wife, or plunged a dagger into the bosom of a friend. Now-a-days it is impossible for a young fellow to be allowed a dawn of spirit unless he has destroyed his woman, or killed his man, and trampled upon

on



on every institute which ought to be sacred to society. Nay, to such a height are matters at present carried, that we often boast of our crimes as if they were so many virtues, and recount with an air of the most exquisite satisfaction, how many times we have been drunk within the course of the week; how many strumpets we have visited, or how many times we have endangered our lives in the midnight disputes of a common brothel. If any body is sensible enough to decline accompanying us on these pretty expeditions, we set him down as a spiritless ignorant milkop, equally destitute of ambition and understanding. What is more, in proportion as he manifests a repugnance to join in our extravagances, in proportion we turn him into a ridicule, and load him with the most insuperable contempt; where we ought to honour him with the greatest share of our admiration.

But what in the course of general observation astonishes me most is, that a man shall claim a right to be profligate, in proportion as we allow him to be sensible; and think himself entitled to be vicious, according to the estimate which we make of his understanding. Nothing is more common now-a-days, than to praise our intimate friends in something like the following manner; *Why to be sure Tom or Jack such a one is a very wicked dog, but then he's no fool*; thus that very good sense which should be considered as an aggravation of his conduct, is looked upon as an extenuation at least, and we think him entirely justified in the most criminal undertakings, in proportion as he is really without the shadow of excuse.

Some

Some people indeed who affect to possess an extraordinary share of principle, propose a limitation to their vices, and make a sort of agreement with their own consciences, not to be wicked above such a certain number of years. The period which they fix for the date of their reformation, is generally the day of marriage; without ever reflecting on the possibility of never living to this period, they go on in an uninterrupted course of licentiousness, and imagine they may with propriety disturb the peace of every other person's family, till they have actually got a family of their own; nor does a parent or a guardian once suppose any of these worthy gentlemen an improper match for their daughters or their wards, on account of their professed profligacy; on the contrary, it is a received opinion, that a reformed rake makes the best husband, and that he is the properest companion in life for a woman of virtue and honour, who never before had an acquaintance with a woman of virtue or honour at all.

From these considerations on the prodigious encouragement which vice so incessantly receives from the force of example, I am led to be an advocate for hypocrisy, and induced to wish, that those who are too wise or too spirited to be reasoned out of their errors, would at least be humane enough to practice them with some share of caution, that they may not seduce others from the sentiments of virtue, nor be instrumental in the destruction of any body but themselves.

I am very sensible how extremely unfashionable it is for a writer to press any considerations  
of

of a future state upon the mind of an elegant reader. Now-a-days, it is indelicate to talk of eternity with any kind of weight, and repugnant to every sentiment of politeness, for a man to speak with the smallest veneration of his God. Yet surely, as long as we are sensible upon how precarious a tenure our existence depends, we should now and then think that a day of account will come; and where we are so certain of our mortality, we ought to recollect that we are sometime to die. It was an excellent remark of Julius Cæsar's, the morning of his assassination, when Antony asked him why he talked so much on death; "That what might each moment happen, should employ every moment of a wise man's thoughts." Certain indeed it is, that a frequent consideration on this awful period, is the best means of enabling us to sustain it; and as certain it is, that those are only fit to live who are always in a condition to die.



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NUMB. XCV. *Saturday, November 22.*

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*To the BABLER.*

S I R,

**G**RATITUDE is a quality of so bewitching a nature, that we generally look upon it as a complication of all the virtues, and suppose that no man can be destitute of any other, who is happily in possession of this ; yet amiable soever as it is universally considered, perhaps there is no excellence in the catalogue so little studied, or for which in general we entertain so unaccountable a contempt.

In former ages, an attention to the dictates of gratitude was reckoned an indispensable part of our duty, and nothing was looked upon in a more detestable light than an insensibility of favours, or an unworthy return where we had been in the least obliged ; one particular species of gratitude was held inviolably sacred, and the Romans were so religiously punctual in the performance of it, that they put the offender's life in the power of his benefactor, wherever they saw it transgressed.

The instance where the Romans punished the want of gratitude with such severity, was the breach or neglect of that tenderness and affection which was indispensibly due to a father from a son : That sensible people judiciously considered, that if a man could behave with  
ingrati-

ingratitude to a parent ~~that~~ had endued him with no less a blessing than his very existence, he must be dead to every sense of obligations from any other quarter; and fancied that a person capable of bursting through the most sacred ordinances of nature, was capable of bursting through the most sacred of society too; from this principle, in the early ages of that celebrated republic, a father was invested with an absolute authority over the lives of his children, and he that was not a good son, was universally looked upon as a bad member of society.

Though we are perhaps the only nation in Europe who retain any part of the Roman freedom, yet perhaps we are the only one which does not retain a glimmer of its exalted sentiments in this respect; for with us, small a portion of gratitude as we still continue to keep up, a parent is the only person in the world to whom we think it utterly unnecessary to be shewn; as if he who was entitled to the greatest share, should be the only one denied a mark of it all.—Nay, to so preposterous a length is the general opinion hurried away in this point, that a man who lends us a single guinea to riot in excess and sensuality, shall receive much greater instances of our gratitude, than an indulgent parent who toils during a whole life for our welfare, and makes a comfortable establishment for us and our posterity.

It is a received notion among the generality of people, that a son is no way obliged to his father for any tokens of affection which he may receive, because the old gentleman finds a particular satisfaction in providing for his happiness, and is sufficiently repaid, if he sees his solicitude attended

tended with the desired effects.—Alas ! Mr. Babler, what sentiments are we to entertain of people who reason in any manner like this ? Does it follow, that because a parent finds a pleasure in the performance of his duty, that a son should think himself exempted from the necessary prosecution of his ? The very pleasure which is here pleaded as a sufficient reward for the affection of the father, is to the last degree an aggravation of ingratitude in the son, and instead of palliating the breach of his filial affection, leaves him without a possibility of excuse ; for surely those who take a pleasure in the promotion of our happiness must be doubly entitled to our gratitude, and we ought to feel a glow of veneration arising from a consciousness of their motives, as much as from the actual benefits themselves.

For my own part, Mr. Babler, I am perfectly of opinion with the primitive Romans, that an ungrateful son can never make a good man ; the ties subsisting between father and child are of a nature so inconceivably delicate, that he, who is capable of bursting them asunder, is incapable of being bound either by gratitude or honour to any body else.—It is incredible, Sir, to think the numberless hours of anxiety a parent must endure before he can rear a son to maturity.—It is incredible to think after he has even brought him to years of discretion, how unceasingly solicitous he is, lest some unforeseen calamity should blast the harvest of his happiness, and cut him unrelentingly off : and what does a parent require for all this ? What does he demand for the gifts of life, education, and fortune, which he has so liberally bestowed, but that



that the son will pay a little attention to his own interest, and treat the hand to which he is so eminently obliged, with tenderness and respect?

From the foregoing cursory reflexions, Mr. Babler, if filial ingratitude should of all other crimes appear the most odious, let me address myself to the bosoms of our youth, and for their own sakes, request they will immediately shake it off; lest in their own old age, providence might be pleased to make them know in the emphatic language of the poet:

—How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,  
To have a disobedient child.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

SENEX.

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NUMB. XCVI. *Saturday, November 27.*

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**N**OTHING is so general a topic with all the old fellows of my acquaintance, as the depravity of the present times, and the visible degeneracy of manners since they themselves were at the blooming age of five and twenty, and shone away in a splendid round of the various fashionable amusements. For my own part, though pretty far advanced in the vale of years, I am not altogether so passionately attached to my juvenile days, as not to be sensible that we had as many follies and vices among us then, as the severest satirist now existing can possibly point out; nor am I so complaisant to the present pe-  
riod

riod as not to see that there is the greatest room, as well as the greatest necessity, both to be ashamed and to amend. In short, the world, with regard to vice and virtue, is pretty much the same as it was five hundred years ago; and probably for five hundred years to come, it will still continue to be actuated by the same motives, however it may differ in the manner or the means.

Greatly soever as we may imagine human nature to be degenerated, yet if we take but a slight survey of mankind, we shall find the principal number of our vices and follies to be rather the consequence of our inconsideration, than the effect of an absolute badness of heart. We are weak and vicious more through the levity of temper and the prevalence of example, than either a narrowness of understanding or a depravity of inclination; and it is by denying ourselves time to examine either the absurdity of our most favourite pursuits, or the danger of a slavish obedience to fashion, that we so generally become the objects of our own detestation or contempt. Instead of making reason the guide of our actions, we are directed by example; and instead of enquiring how far such and such a behaviour may be agreeable to the sentiments of virtue, we never ask any question, but how far it is consistent with the custom of the times; hence we drink, fight, swear, and run through the whole catalogues of vices and follies, not so much because we like drinking, fighting or swearing, as to avoid the appearance of singularity; and risque not only our happiness in this world, but our everlasting salvation in the next, for no other reason but to join in with the croud,  
and

and seem of the same stamp with the general run of people.

Kitt Hairbrain is a young fellow of many good qualities, and has a heart as ready to relieve the distresses of his fellow creatures as any man of my acquaintance; yet Kitt would look upon it as the greatest insult imaginable, if you supposed he was not at any time willing to cut the throat of his most intimate companion, and to debauch the wife or sister of his nearest friend; not but he would feel the utmost reluctance in the perpetration of either, and be sensible, that it was a very unpardonable crime; but the force of example gets the better of his humanity, and he is less afraid of a laugh from a fool or a villain, than the eternal displeasure of his God.

Ask Kitt how he reconciles this behaviour, and he will answer by the force of example too — “Dam it, (will he reply) I am sure I am no worse than Bob Brazen, Dick Dare, Will Wildfire, and a thousand others of my acquaintance;” and thus as long as he finds any body as bad or worse than himself, cries hush to every argument of his reason, and goes on in the commission of new follies, or the perpetration of new crimes. Sometimes he compounds matters, and opens a sort of debtor and creditor account between his conscience and himself, with which he is not a little satisfied; as for instance: because he pays his debts punctually, he imagines he has no occasion ever to appear at the public worship of his creator: because he frequently relieves one poor family, he looks upon himself as justified in plunging another into the worst of distress and disgrace; and because he  
some,



sometimes fulfils the duties of christianity, he fancies that in the general he has a right to make a jest of them all.

Alas, how many Kitt Hairbrains might be found on an accurate inspection through the kingdom?—If the present paper should fall into any such hands, let me, if I cannot make an appeal to their reason, at least address an admonition to their pride, and advise them, if they must follow the example of their neighbours, to copy those actions only which are worthy of imitation and regard; since nothing but wisdom or virtue can vindicate the credit of our understandings in an imitation of any nature; and since he must be an idiot or madman, who treads in no other footsteps than those which are marked by the rascal or the fool.

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NUMB. XCVII. *Saturday, December 4.*

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**T**HOUGH nothing is so common as to find every man dissatisfied with the lot in which providence has thought proper to place him, yet nothing is so certain, as that no man, take his situation all in all, would be his neighbour instead of being himself. The great father of the universe has graciously planted an inherent sort of pride in the breast of all his creatures, which exalts them in their own opinion, and gives them an advantage over the rest of the world in some particular point that compensates for a thousand inconveniencies, and reconciles them

them to the severity of real or imaginary evils upon the whole.

If we examine the frame of the human mind, we shall immediately see, that every man holds much the same opinion of himself which he entertains of his country; he readily acknowledges, that in some particular circumstances such and such a person has an advantage of him, but in the main he nevertheless thinks himself the superior, and looks down with an air of disdain on all who are hardy enough to dispute his opinion: a modern author has not described this sort of vanity unhappily.

E'en the pale Russian shivering as he lies,  
Beneath the horror of his bitterest skies,  
While the loud tempest rattles o'er his head,  
Or bursts all dreadful on his tott'ring shed,  
Hugs a soft something closely to his soul,  
Which sooths the cutting sharpness of the pole,  
Elates his bosom with a conscious pride,  
And smiles contempt on all the world beside.

I was conversing with my nephew Harry last night upon this subject, and the young rogue made an observation or two that gave me much satisfaction. I don't know how it is, Sir, says he, but though my acquaintance are everlastingly wrangling with themselves, I can find none of them, upon a fair examination, willing to be any body else. There's Ned Grovely, for instance, who is perpetually cursing his stars for not giving him a good estate like Dick Bumper; yet at the same time, the universe would not bribe him to make an exchange with Dick for legs. In the same manner Dick is very miserable at

the clumsiness of his calves, but nevertheless hugs himself up in the recollection that he can drink as much as any man in England at a sitting, and play an admirable game at all-fours.

You know Sally Bromley in Pall-Mall who visits at my mother's, and is so terribly pitted with the small pox; Sally is to the last degree unhappy on that account, and envies every woman with a tolerable face; yet I have heard her frequently declare, that a fine set of teeth was the first of all the beauties; and then observed how she turned round to receive the universal admiration with as much confidence as if she was absolute dutchess of Hamilton. In short, let me go where I will, I can find nobody but what is the *rara avis* of self imagination: neither poverty nor disease can eradicate the consequential something of the bosom that lifts us to the pinnacle of distinction, and gives us so great a pre-eminence above our neighbours. I have known a man with a tolerable voice refuse the acquaintance of a very deserving young fellow because he could not sing; and heard of an Oxford scholar, who when he was asked his opinion of Shakespear, came out with a *psbaw* of disgust, and replied, the fellow did not understand Greek.

When we consider these various foundations for happiness, which providence has planted in the minds of all its creatures, we cannot help admiring the goodness of the divine Being, in making our very foibles a source of felicity, and creating such fountains of satisfaction from such inconsiderable means. What gratitude is there not then due to so all-sufficiently wise and beneficent a hand! Devotion itself is lost in admiration



tion at so stupendous a bounty, and scarcely knows which most to wonder or adore.

But notwithstanding we derive so much pleasure from the indulgence of particular foibles, we ought always to be uncommonly careful how we take any satisfaction in the indulgence of our faults; these, though for a moment they may afford us some degree of felicity, are always productive of anxiety and wretchedness in the end. Unfashionable as the doctrine of virtue and morality may appear, experience however fully convinces us, that nothing else can lay a solid foundation for happiness, and that every other basis is, literally speaking, building on the sand, and grasping alone at emptiness and air.

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NUMB. XCVIII. *Saturday, December 11.*

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**I**T was a very sensible observation of Sir Richard Steel's, that in order to make a good fortune, it was necessary to carry the appearance of an easy one.—The generality of mankind are always ready to respect us in proportion as they think us opulent; and pay a veneration to our circumstances which they frequently refuse to ourselves; neither the most excellent understanding, nor the most benevolent heart are ever treated with half the deference which the arrogant swell of fortune receives at our hands; and we even pause with a degree of reverence at the mention of ten thousand pounds, when we speak with the greatest familiarity of omnipotence, and jest with the awful majesty of our God.

The most whimsical fellow of this cast with whom I ever have been acquainted, was poor Ralph Harper; Ralph had an unaccountable respect for rich men, though he never expected to reap a single sixpence from the happiness of their circumstances; and, though utterly out of business he would not be a day absent from change for the universe; it did him good, he affirmed, to see such a number of rich people assembled together, and the surest way in the world of gaining his heart was, to introduce him to any body possessed of a large fortune. Whenever he met with a strange face in company, instead of asking about character, the constant question was, *what is he worth?* and instead of an enquiry

quiry about good sense, he never troubled himself about any thing but what his name would bring at the bottom of a piece of paper. For a man with twenty thousand pounds he had always a low bow; for one of fifty, a profound reverence; but if he found a person in possession of a plumb, he was ready to pay him an implicit adoration. This unaccountable peculiarity he frequently carried to very ridiculous extremes. One day, in particular, he met me in the city, and upon the score of an old friendship, insisted I should go home with him and eat a bit of mutton; I consented, but unhappily, as we came down Cheapside, he saw a sober quaker on the opposite side of the street, who kept a tallow chandler's shop somewhere in the neighbourhood of Barbican; on this gentleman he had no sooner fixed his eye, than totally forgetting that I was his guest, he broke from me with all possible haste, saying, "My dear Mr. Babler, you must excuse me; yonder is a person worth thirty thousand pounds, whom I would not miss speaking to for the world; he has asked me repeatedly to dine with him, and I think now is as good a time as can be—God bless you, I suppose we shall see you at the club in the evening."

I could not help laughing very heartily at Ralph's manner of behaving; and having nothing particular to do, I took it into my head to follow him as close as I conveniently could without being observed, I had not, however, gone above a hundred yards, before he gave an instant spring across the kennel, to a fresh face, and calling out to his little friend the Quaker, desired him to go on, for it was out of his power to dine



with him that day, having some very pressing business to transact, which till then had entirely escaped his memory. I shrewdly suspected that this new acquaintance was a man of rather greater fortune than the person for whom I had been so strangely discarded; I was not deceived in my conjecture; he stopped to speak to somebody and Ralph likewise making a halt to wait for him, happened to meet my eye, and gave me a glance of no little significance. As I was passing him by, he caught hold of my hand, and assured me, that, that tall gentleman in black, who was standing at such a door, was one of the worthiest fellows in the kingdom; for says Ralph, "there is not a day he rises, but what he is master of sixty thousand pounds."

In a few minutes Ralph and his friend passed me by, and the odd mortal was acquiescing to every thing he said, with such a humility of respect, that I thought it was wholly improbable he should find any fresh opportunity of shifting his company; notwithstanding the plausibility of appearances, however, in less than five minutes, he was in full chace after a chariot that drove through St. Paul's Church-yard with the greatest rapidity, and was said to belong to a Jewish merchant, of the first eminence, well known at that time for his intimate connexion with Sir Robert Walpole.

If the possession of a large fortune could bestow either worth or good sense, I should never be surprised to see the rich treated with the utmost respect; or had people even but a distant expectation of gaining any advantage from the opulence of their purse-proud acquaintance, something might be said in their defence; but where  
without

without a shadow of merit, or a hope of his conferring a favour, a man is next to be idolized, merely *because* he is master of ten or twenty thousand pounds, I own I cannot help being hurt at the little-mindedness of his worshippers, and must inevitably tax them with a palpable poverty of spirit, if not a total want of understanding.

In the dissolute reign of Charles the second, the celebrated Killigrew was one night at supper with the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Dorset, Lord Rochester, and some other noblemen of the most eminent abilities; the latter, by some means, happened to turn the conversation on the great honour which Killigrew received, from the dignity of his company. The wag, who, notwithstanding the inferiority of his rank, possessed more real sense than the whole groupe put together, took all in good part for some time; till, at last, finding matters grow a little serious, he stood up, and delivered himself to the following effect. “And, pray my lord, whence  
 “proceeds all this mighty honour which I am  
 “thought to receive? From your dignity, I  
 “suppose, and your fortune? As to the first,  
 “you find, by sad experience, that where there  
 “is a want of worth, this gew-gaw of title won’t  
 “keep a man from contempt; a fool, or a rascal,  
 “is equally a fool and a rascal, whether he  
 “is a plain Killigrew, or a great earl of Rochester: as to the second point, your fortune;  
 “when you make me the better for it, why then  
 “it will teach me to esteem you, till then don’t  
 “mention it as a matter of the least importance  
 “to me; for as long as I pay my reckoning,  
 “and receive no obligations, in regard to cir-

“ circumstances, I am company for a Cresus, and  
“ would not suffer an emperor to treat me with  
“ the shadow of a disrespect within the walls of  
“ a tavern.”

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NUMB. XCIX. *Saturday, December 18.*

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I HAVE often delivered it as my opinion, that one of the principal indiscretions which any woman can possibly be guilty of, is to receive the addresses of a lover, whom she does not mean to encourage. If he happens to be a worthy man, it is ungenerous as well as cruel to keep him in suspense; and he is too poor a sacrifice even for her vanity, if he happens to be a fool; but if a just consideration for the lover does not more commonly excite an exalted share of benevolence in the female bosom, it is surprising that the ladies are not more generally actuated by a sensible regard for themselves, since this indiscriminate permission which they grant to the addresses of an indifferent admirer, may very fatally injure them with the real object of their esteem; and give the man who has indeed the possession of their hearts, but too much reason for imagining that the same vanity might induce them *after* marriage to encourage that fascinating voice of admiration, which was found so exquisitely ravishing to their ears *before*.

It is a mighty pleasant notion which prevails among the greatest number of our young ladies, that



that there is a sort of destiny in love; and that it is utterly impossible to resist the orders of their fate in the disposition of their hearts. Perhaps neither the army nor the play-house has destroyed the quiet of so many bosoms as the belief of this delightful predestination; for a girl now-a-days, no sooner has a hankering after a fellow, but she imagines the stars have been at work about her, and looks upon it as obeying the will of heaven to follow—the bent of her own inclinations.

One thing indeed very remarkable in the decision of the stars, is, that it never lays any disagreeable restraints upon the mind of a young woman; on the contrary, with an unparalleled degree of good-nature, the stars always give those orders which are most certain of meeting with her own approbation, and are as tender of her repose and satisfaction, as she can possibly be herself. This excessive complaisance in the stars furnishes the designing and illiberal part of our sex with many opportunities of gaining the most mercenary or most infamous ends; it enables us to rob a woman not only of all filial affection, but to strip her of her fortune and her honour, and puts it in our power not only to destroy all her happiness in this world, but to endanger her everlasting felicity too.

That my fair readers may know with certainty, at what time the stars begin to influence their conduct, I shall set down some infallible rules which will serve them upon all occasions, and which, if rightly attended to, may possibly prevent a thousand inconveniencies to many individuals, and a thousand anxieties to many families.

First then—Whenever a young woman begins to make secret appointments with a man, for the mere sake of chatting with him, and taking an agreeable walk, she may be pretty confident that the stars are then debating about the future disposition of her life, and that she is in a fair way of losing her reputation.

Secondly—Whenever she receives a letter upon the subject of love, and declines either peremptorily to forbid the addresses of the sender, or to disclose the affair to her friends, she may be satisfied that her stars are very deceitful, and that they are only tempting her to wretchedness and disgrace. The reason is obvious. A lover has no occasion to be concealed, who would make an unexceptionable husband; and few ever require the secrecy of a mistress on this head, but those who have a design against her honour or her fortune.

Thirdly—Whenever she is uneasy about the absence of any particular man, nettled at seeing him with any other woman, or angry at hearing any part of his conduct condemned; the symptoms strongly indicate that the stars are going to deprive her of her heart; and it behoves her to be uncommonly attentive to the principles, and merit of the person for whom she feels this partiality.

And fourthly—But if instead of real worth, and fine understanding, the object of this partiality should be fashionable only by his vices, and eminent only for his knowledge in the superficials of behaviour, let her then if she would counteract the malignity of her destiny, and soar superior to the stars themselves; let her exert her reason to tear the growing tenderness from  
her

her heart ; and above every thing, if her favourite has once in his life betrayed the confidence of any other woman, let her banish him instantly from her sight, and recollect, that a man who has once violated the vows of love, is too despicable ever to be loved at all.

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NUMB. C. *Saturday, December 25.*

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*To the* BABLER.

S I R,

**I**T is really surprising, when we consider that the people of the present age have just the same senses of taste, smell, and feeling, and just the same faculties of hearing and sight as their ancestors possessed, that there should be so wide a disparity in their manners, as almost to furnish a supposition that we are quite a different species, and have nothing in our compositions that can indicate our descent, but the mere form of our progenitors.

To be sure it must be acknowledged, that our deviation from some manners of former ages, was a very sensible proceeding, as many of the antient customs were infinitely too barbarous to be kept up among a people who every day made so rapid a progress in all the delicacies of breeding which constitute the standard of real gentility. Formerly a blunt sincerity, little better than absolutely rudeness, was the characteristic of



of the times, and every man thought himself obliged to deliver his genuine sentiments upon every occasion, let those sentiments be never so offensive to his acquaintance. At this happier period, we are entirely for accommodating our language, to the wishes of the world, and therefore the whole tendency of our expressions is to make every man more and more satisfied with himself. Hence we soften the most palpable avarice into discretion and œconomy; dishonesty passes for wildness and dissipation; blasphemy for humour and wit; and absolute murder, for spirit and vivacity. In short, we are so extremely well bred, that there is not a vice but what we keep in countenance by our politeness, nor a folly which we do not support from a principle of civility.

The refinement of the present age does not, however, content itself with making people happy in their own opinions, but it recommends them also to the respect of the world, and raises the most inconsiderable characters to an instant degree of dignity; now-a-days it would be unpardonably vulgar to call a milk-woman by any other appellation than that of a lady; and the meanest artisan within the weekly-bills, if he happens to want an apprentice, will publicly advertise for a *young gentleman*. A bit of lace upon a waistcoat, makes a squire of a fellow who has not sixpence in the world; and a paltry little ensigncy is as sure of conferring the formidable word *captain*, as if the owner had actually given a thousand guineas for a company. As to the more elevated titles of knight, lord, marquis and duke, they are so notoriously kept sacred for men of real integrity and virtue, that complaisance

sance never has it in his power to degrade them by any casual prostitution to the undeserving; these, therefore, must be exempted from the severity of animadversion, and supposed to continue in the same pristine state of purity as when they were originally conferred upon our ancestors.

But of all the deviations which we have made from the customs of antiquity, I know of none which does a greater honour to our politeness, than the judicious disregard which at this season of the year we shew to a ridiculous festival, that used to be formerly celebrated with so much solemnity by our progenitors: as the name of this festival may possibly be forgotten among people of extraordinary elegance, it may not be amiss perhaps to observe, that it was called CHRISTMAS, and was held as an annual commemoration of the Deity's wonderful goodness in sending his only Son to take upon him the form of human nature, and to make an awful atonement for the sins of mankind. Among our forefathers this anniversary was constantly considered as a test both of their principles as Christians, and their benevolence as men: an event which brought no less than everlasting happiness to all the world, they thought it improper to pass without marks of particular joy; and were ambitious to imitate the benignity of their creator as far as their abilities would reach, by exercising every act of benevolence between themselves. Hence at the return of Christmas the sighing heart naturally expected a mitigation of its sorrows; and it was reckoned nothing more than a duty to wipe away the tear of affliction from the eye of distress. After the offices  
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of charity were thus performed, nothing prevailed but a universal festivity; and every face was either dilated with the emotions of gratitude, or expanded with the more tumultuous sensations of joy; a continual intercourse of the most friendly nature subsisted between family and family; and in short, the acknowledgements which were made for the mercy of the divine being, participating in some degree of a divine fervour, *all* (to use the poet's definition of paradise) *was harmony and love.*

In the present age, as we are much too polite to entertain any notions of religion, so we are much too sensible to shew any solicitude about the day in which the almighty founder of what was once a belief in this country, came into the world. Instead, therefore, of sending at this period to relieve the sons and daughters of calamity, we fly where it is impossible for their lamentations to reach us; and instead of maintaining a social intercourse with our neighbours, we lock ourselves up, and give an unlimited scope to the gloominess of our own reflexions. Indeed a most perfect intimacy of cards all this time goes on between us and our acquaintance; we visit one another in the most unreserved manner by message and compliment; and are the dearest friends on earth, through the negotiation of a couple of fellows in livery.

If posterity should happen to differ as widely from us, as we have differed from our forefathers, I suppose in the course of a century or two, it will be looked upon as inelegant, to know that such a festival as Christmas ever existed, and thought preposterously gothic for a man to be acquainted with the names of his own family.

Politeness.



Politeness may render it necessary perhaps to make a total revolution in the affairs of the world; and as now we are all ambitious of being reckoned men of sense, it may then be the mode to appear in the real character of the present times, and the universal wish of every man, like honest Dogberry, to be set down a fool.

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NUMB. CI. *Saturday, January 2.*

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*To the* BABLER.

SIR,

**I**T was an excellent observation of the celebrated Rochfoucault, that vice and virtue were never judged of in proportion to the real deformity of the one, or the native excellence of the other, but only in proportion to the respective rank of those with whom either were to be found; the difference of stations always aggravating the enormity of the first, or derogating from the beauty of the latter.

That there is but too much foundation for the remark of this illustrious writer, no man acquainted in ever so small a degree with the world, can take upon him to dispute; the same action, which in a tradesman would be mentioned as a matter of no merit, in a nobleman would be spoke of with the highest admiration. My worthy friends upon the Change, seldom think there is any great compliment due to a mechanic for being punctual in discharging what he owes; but let me ask, if they do not talk in raptures of a nobleman,

nobleman, at the court end of the town, if he happens to be unfashionably remarkable in paying his debts. If a tradesman seduces an unhappy innocent from the paths of virtue, the crime is heightened in the blackest dyes; but let a man of fashion be guilty of the very same action, and it sinks under the softening appellation of modish indiscretion or illiberal vivacity. If a general behaves gallantly in the field of battle, his reputation is immortal; but let a private centinal perform the most astonishing prodigies of valour, the obscurity of his situation casts a veil over his merit, we mention him perhaps a second time, and then consign him to oblivion ever after.

If a proper examination was to be made into the case, this partiality on the side of rank, would appear no less ridiculous than unjust; for people, in the more elevated stations of life, receiving an education that ought to teach them the nicer proprieties of behaviour in a manner superior to the ordinary classes of mankind, are consequently bound to a stricter observance of their duty than those by whom they are not so perfectly understood. Yet such we see is the depravity of the age, that those claim the widest dispensation from their moral obligations, who ought to be the best acquainted with the necessity of their being discharged; and those only are rendered inexcusable, who, from their education and rank in life, are neither so convinced of the necessity, or so happy in the means.

Was a poor ignorant foot-boy to blaspheme his Maker, the crime would be considered in its proper colours; but should his master take the same liberty with the Divine Being, it would be reckoned no more than a lively stroke of wit,

or the casual result of a sprightly imagination. We have lately seen a poor man publicly punished for speaking too freely of *Moses's* legation; while a Bolingbroke has been held in general admiration, though he denied the diviner mission of *Christ*. Happy however is it for the meaner orders of people, that they are bound to a rectitude of behaviour from which their superiors think themselves exempted by the indulgence of the laws; as the wholesome restriction which they live under in this world, will be of infinite advantage to their situation in the next.

But to condemn the present æra only, for this glaring partiality to rank, would be injustice to ourselves.—The history of all ages, and the annals of all nations, are fraught with examples where the vices of the low are dressed up in the most aggravating light, and their virtues as constantly suppressed.—Patriots and poets, heroes and philosophers, owe as much to their rank as to their abilities; unless they lived at particular periods where they were uncommonly rare, or had indeed an uncommon share of abilities to recommend them. Had not Ovid been a man of fashion, his writings would not have outlived himself, notwithstanding his egregious vanity; but his rank stamped a sort of merit upon him in his days, and hence they are looked upon with admiration in ours; nor would the immortal Marcus Brutus have ever been handed down with reverence to posterity, had he, like the unhappy Mr. Felton, been only an obscure lieutenant of foot.

As I have touched upon patriotism, I shall beg leave to conclude my paper with as great an instance of patriotism as history can possibly produce,



duce, though the patriot was no more than an ignorant malefactor, who suffered for a highway robbery when the necessity of the times had left his family without bread.

The third of June, 1734, one Michael Carmody, a journeyman Weaver, was executed in the county of Cork, in Ireland. His branch of business had been long in a very declining way, owing to the wearing of cottons, which was highly destructive to the woollen manufactory, and in general injurious to the kingdom.—The criminal was dressed in cotton, and not only the hangman, but the gallows was decorated in cotton too. When Carmody was brought to the place of execution, his whole thoughts were turned upon the distresses of his country, and, instead of making use of his last moments with the priest, the poor fellow addressed the surrounding multitude in the following extraordinary oration:

“ Give ear, O good people, to the words of  
“ a dying sinner; I confess I have been guilty  
“ of many crimes that necessity obliged me to  
“ commit, which starving condition I was in,  
“ I am well assured was occasioned by the scar-  
“ city of money that has proceeded from the  
“ great discouragement of our woollen manu-  
“ factures.

“ Therefore, good christians, consider that if  
“ you go on to suppress your own goods by  
“ wearing such cottons as I am now cloathed  
“ in, you will bring your country into misery,  
“ which will consequently swarm with such  
“ unhappy malefactors as your present object is,  
“ and the blood of every miserable felon  
“ that

“ that will hang, (after this warning from the  
 “ gallows) will lie at your doors.

“ And if you have any regard for the prayers  
 “ of an expiring mortal, I beg you will not buy  
 “ of the hangman the cotton garments that now  
 “ adorn the gallows, because I can’t rest quiet  
 “ in my grave if I *should see* the very things  
 “ worn that brought me to misery, thievery, and  
 “ this untimely end; all which I pray of the  
 “ gentry to hinder their children and servants,  
 “ for their own characters sake, though they  
 “ have no tenderness for their country, because  
 “ none will hereafter wear cottons, but oyster-  
 “ women, criminals, whores, hucksters, and  
 “ common hangmen.”

I submit to the reader of judgment, if sentiments of a more patriotic nature could heave from the bosom of a Sidney or a Russel, than what breathed in the coarse unstudied harangue of this unfortunate malefactor. At the very hour of death, in the immediate apprehension of an eternity, drest up in all the horrors of popish bigotry and superstition: I say, at such an hour, an ignorant, poor wretch to be only mindful of his country’s welfare, is a greatness of soul superior to the most celebrated stoic of antiquity, and throws even the *Cato of Utica* in a scale of comparative cowardice, was there a possibility of a parallel. But as Mr. Pope beautifully says:

’Tis from high life high characters are drawn,  
 A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn;  
 A judge is just; a chanc’lor juster still;  
 A gownsmen learn’d; a bishop—what you will;  
 Wife

Wife if a minister; but if a king,  
More wise; more just; more learn'd; more ev'ry  
thing.

In life's low veil, the foil the virtue's like,  
They please as beauties; here, as wonders strike;  
Tho' the same sun, with all diffusive rays,  
Blush in the rose, and in the diamond blaze,  
We own the stronger effort of his pow'r,  
And always set the gem above the flow'r.

NUMB. CII. *Saturday, January 8.*

*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

I HAVE not been more pleased a long time, than at reading one of your late papers relative to the general absurdity of toasting; you have very justly observed, that in proportion as any kingdom is inclined to drinking it is barbarous of course, and have, with the greatest reason imaginable, estimated the understanding of every people by the criterion of sobriety.

My motive for taking so particular a notice of that paper, Mr. Babler, is my being married to as worthy a little man as any within the weekly bills, who has one unhappy propensity, and that is an invincible attachment to the glass.—At a very early period he was introduced into life, and commenced an acquaintance with a set of subaltern worthies, who were distinguished by the name of *damn'd honest fellows*, and always placed  
the



the summit of human felicity in the midnight roar of a tavern.

Having through some unaccountable infatuations imbibed an extraordinary opinion of this hopeful class of gentlemen, he always regulated his conduct, not by what the considerate part of mankind was likely to think of his behaviour, but by what it was probable the little circle at the Black Swan would be inclined to imagine at the next meeting; hence there was scarce an absurdity into which he did not launch with an exquisite relish, nor an irregularity which he did not look upon as a mark of superior understanding; he got upon the table to sing "When forc'd from dear Hebe to go," and burned his wig out of honour to the royal family; every battle which our armies gained abroad was sure to keep him in a constant state of intoxication for a fortnight, till by incessantly pledging the healths of our various gallant commanders he had almost intirely exhausted his own.

By this time his friends thought it absolutely necessary that he should look out for a wife and take up; by means of an old family connection, I was the first person proposed to him; his relations spoke to mine, settled the affair, and we were married in about three months: for near six weeks there was not a more domestic man in the universe; he supped regularly at home, drank a chearful pint or played a game at cards with two or three orderly friends in the neighbourhood; but unluckily this mode of living was too unexceptionable to last for any continuance; a favourite companion of his came accidentally to town, took him out one evening to the Black Swan and rekindled that rage for underbred festivity,

vity, which originally led him into such a perpetual round of excess; he now went out every night, and seldom returned till two or three in the morning; my fears for him kept me continually up till he came home, and then I had the pleasure of receiving him in such a pickle as is much more easy for a gentleman to imagine than it is either possible or proper for me to describe: suffice it, however, that he was intoxicated every night, and every day underwent a most severe indisposition, to recruit himself for the fatigues of the next evening.

This has been the case, Mr. Babler, for almost five years, and you can scarcely suppose how miserable I have constantly been from his ridiculous mode of proceeding; yet, Sir, though I flatter myself that I am capable of advising him pretty much for his benefit, I have never presumed to say a single syllable; let the admonitions of a wife be never so tender or respectful, they are always looked upon as so many indirect commands; and a husband is immediately set down among the hen-pecked fraternity, if he pays the least attention to her advice, however necessary for the interest of his fortune or the credit of his understanding.

I am forcibly led, Mr. Babler, into a communication of family-affairs, because I do not choose to lay the folly of my husband's behaviour immediately before himself, and have no friend whatsoever on whom I could rely for the proper execution of so difficult a task; every body supposes, because I have the key of the cash, and am never checked for laying out what money I think proper, that I must be a very happy woman: but, alas, Mr. Babler, the case is widely different,

ferent, my husband has to be sure a thousand good qualities; but do these qualities secure him from broils in the hour of intoxication; or prevent him from being contemptible in the interval of excess? About a week ago he came home to me with his eye almost cut out, by a drinking-glass, which was thrown at him for refusing a particular toast; and no later than last night, he was brought to the door in a coffin, upon the shoulders of four companions, who, by way of dirge, sung the roast beef of Old England as they carried him, while the helpless poor creature at the end of every stanza endeavoured to raise himself up, and chorus with, "O the rare English roast beef."

"My husband's health every day decaying, through these irregularities, and his character likewise sinking into contempt; I beg, Mr. Babler, you will tell him that the name of *an honest fellow*, or the applause of a noisy room, is but a poor compensation for the sacrifice of his life, and the ruin of his family; tell him, Sir, that his companions are people who cannot possibly have the least regard for him, because they are dead to every consideration for themselves—a rational entertainment they are utterly unable to enjoy, because they are never happy till reason is totally destroyed; tell him, Mr. Babler, in short, that life is a matter of much importance, and should never be laughed away for the applauses of a fool: next to being a blockhead himself, the greatest impeachment of his understanding is to associate with block-heads; and next to being a profligate himself, the greatest reflexion upon his heart is to throw away his time upon men of professed irreligion and immorality.

I am, Sir, &c.

M A R I A:



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NUMB. CIII. *Saturday, January 15.*

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**T**HE high and mighty lords of the creation are for ever valuing themselves upon the superior dignity of their sex, and not only deny the poor women any thing like an equal share of understanding with themselves, but even refuse to ratify their claim to an equal degree of principle; as if it was not sufficient to entertain a contemptible idea of their intellects, without establishing as mean an opinion of their hearts. Hence has the notion of female friendship particularly, been an object of constant ridicule to every fashionable writer; hence have we been a thousand times assured, that a laced cap, or an elegant pair of ruffles, was a matter consequential enough to break the strongest bonds of esteem that ever subsisted between two of the most sensible women in the universe; and hence it has been asserted, that there is no possibility for their intercourse to subsist a single moment after each of them had entertained a favourable sentiment about the same man.

Without once striving to refute any of these positions, I shall only lament that the gentlemen have not endeavoured to give some testimonies in support of their own conduct, before they attempted in this good-natured manner to cast the first stone; because it is rather unfortunate that the charge so strongly urged against the ladies should, at the same time, exist with infinitely more justice against themselves: let us,  
however,

however, for argument, suppose, that the friendship of two women, extremely worthy in every other respect, is capable of being entirely broken, by the minutest circumstance which we can possibly conceive; still, will not a moment's examination of the other sex convince us, that their boasted friendships are equally liable to the strongest interruptions from causes equally trivial; and that men of the best understanding frequently run into the most dangerous excesses, from circumstances generally more despicable, and always as absurd.

I readily grant that it is very ridiculous in a woman to break off all manner of connexion with an intimate acquaintance, merely because this acquaintance may unfortunately happen to be better dressed; but is it not to the full as ridiculous for a couple of fellows, who perhaps possess the most exalted understandings, and are besides in all probability, entrusted with a part of the national welfare, to fall out about the niceties of a horse-match, or to disagree about the superior excellence of a game-cock? Undoubtedly yes; and though I shall not even pretend to exculpate the ladies where they chance to be rivals, and suffer their resentment to transport them beyond the bounds of discretion; still I think it much more excusable when they have a little scene of altercation about a worthy man, than when the lords of the creation proceed to cut one another's throats about some infamous strumpet whom they both look upon with an equal degree of contempt.

This being the case then; in the name of wonder whence comes it that the poor women are eternally condemned for the instability of their

friendships, when this very instability is carried to excesses infinitely more criminal as well as ridiculous among ourselves? Are the lords of the human kind, with all the mighty superiority of their wisdom, to be continually indulged in the commission of errors, of which the meanest driveller among the ignorant wretches of the other sex would be to the last degree ashamed? Alas! the ladies may cry out with the lion in the fable, it is well that the men are the only painters on this occasion, or the tables would be instantly reversed!

We may blame the caprices of the women as we please, and censure their absurdities as we think proper; but our partiality will never be able to change the positive nature of things: few of their follies are ever more than ridiculous; few of our own are ever less than criminal; how heartily do we laugh, when a couple of ignorant girls, as we call them, have the least disagreement and break out into altercation; yet, which of ourselves would not imagine he was bound in honour to resent the most unguarded expression of vehemence in a friend, even at the hazard of his life in this world, and the risque of his eternal happiness in the next?

The quarrels of the women, as they are generally less absurd in their beginnings, so their resentments are generally more sensible too: Where a lady has received an offence, she seldom does any thing more than withdraw her acquaintance, and treat the person who offers it with a proper degree of contempt. The regard she entertains for the dignity of her sex, renders it unpardonable to go further: but the lord of the creation is, by the superior degree of his species, allowed



allowed a right of plunging into the deadliest crimes; and by his exalted understanding, a privilege of committing the grossest absurdities: if he happens to meet with a slight injury, he insists upon giving his enemy an opportunity of doing him an irreparable one; and must wash away the imaginary dishonour, either with the blood of his antagonist or his own. To be sure, it is rather hard to take away the life of a friend for a casual vehemence of temper; and rather strange to reduce one's self to a level with a person from whom we have received an offence. But what of that; the glorious inconsistency of manhood obliges us to act in contradiction to our reason; and the fear of a laugh from a block-head, is infinitely more terrible than the vengeance of our God! We all of us, in short, are ready to run a man through the body, who calls us either a scoundrel or a fool; though the invariable tenor of our conduct indicates the strongest ambition for both of these respectable characters; and we are infinitely more offended at being *supposed* either a rascal or an idiot, than at being *absolutely* the very thing itself.

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NUMB. CIV. *Saturday, January 22.*

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*To the B A B L E R.*

S I R,

**I** HAVE read Mr. Johnson's celebrated preface to Shakespear with much attention, and though I look upon it on the whole as a very masterly piece of writing, yet I think in some places he has dealt rather uncandidly with his author! and in others argued not a little repugnant to reason, in his defence.

Mr. Johnson in the first place gives Shakespear very little credit for his tragedies, and calls them, in more places than one, rather the consequence of labour than the effect of genius. There is to be sure great deference due to the opinion of so learned a commentator; but yet with all possible respect to Mr. Johnson, the opinion which he here pronounces is nothing more than bare assertion, and consequently cannot be admitted as absolute proof; for my own part I know several gentlemen of the first abilities, who declare, that Shakespear's tragedies are replete with such beauties as every dispassionate reader must allow to be the spontaneous result of the most exalted imagination; in fact, it is the genuine force of genius, which amidst such a heap of absurdities, renders his tragedies so universally admired; and gives them so prodigious a superiority over all the other poets that ever appeared in this country.

In a question of this kind the feelings of a man's own heart is infinitely better judges than the most elaborate arguments of the first scholar in the kingdom; we may be frequently lost in the mazes of erudition, and be led into a thousand perplexities in the immediate pursuit of perspicuity; but the feelings never can draw us into any mistake; when the voice of nature calls at our bosoms we may be certain that genius is not very far off, however she may appear clogg'd with an uncouth heaviness of expression, or a total disregard of the unities.

Indeed, if Mr. Johnson means that the versification, necessary for tragic poetry, must be more laboured than the familiar stile of comedy, where every man converses as if he was in common company,—his observation may have some weight—but still it will be no impeachment to Shakespear's genius for tragedy: every body knows that verse requires more attention than prose; and nobody is a better judge of this truth than Mr. Johnson. All therefore, that the remark can prove upon the whole is, that Shakespear being more confined to verse in his tragic than in his comic compositions, who necessarily employed a greater portion of time in writing the former than the latter; and might consequently, in a comparative sense, be said to labour at his tragedies. That this is the real state of the case, whoever has read him, with any degree of care, will readily confess; for wherever he has introduced verse into his comedies, we find just the same toil after the nicety of expression, as we see he has used in the most distressful of his opposite performances.



It must undoubtedly be allowed, that in all the verification of Shakespear, there is a stiffness which frequently appears disagreeably uncouth or ridiculously affected: but when we consider at how early a period this great man wrote, instead of being surprised that we meet it so often, we ought to be astonished at not meeting it oftener still. Our language was then almost in its infancy, and verse wanted the hand of experience to polish it into harmony and grace. Exalted therefore, as the genius of Shakespear was, he could not work miracles, nor take upon him to give that mellifluence to numbers which was only to be obtained from the ripening tenderness of time.

Mr. Johnson having urged this objection against the tragedy of Shakespear, he tells us, that in comedy this great man was passionately fond of a quibble, and in order to ring the changes of a despicable witticism upon a word, he would frequently sacrifice both justness of expression and natural propriety. To be sure I must acknowledge that Shakespear was rather too much addicted to this error; but Mr. Johnson, while he indulged the severity of the critic, ought to have maintained the candour of the commentator; he should have considered that this mode of quibbling was the literary vice of the time, and that consequently the whole era was more to be censured than any individual who gave into the absurdity. Every age has some certain species of wit to distinguish it; and this wit, the ablest authors must sometimes study with attention, but none more particularly than those who write for the theatre; a popular joke has more than once turned the fortune of a piece;

piece; and in the early periods of the drama, before the taste of the people was tolerably established, it might be necessary to countenance a general foible for the sake of securing a general approbation. A dramatic writer, unlike all others, has his fate frequently depending on the whimsey of an audience; and therefore it is sometimes dangerous to combat with received prejudices. If a conjecture might be hazarded, I should imagine that this was Shakespear's opinion; for after he had fully fixed his character with the world, we find him in several of his pieces finding fault with the quibbling propensity of the times, and telling us that,

“ Every fool can play upon a word.”

On these accounts I should imagine that where Shakespear condescends to sport upon words he has a great deal to be said in his extenuation; and therefore I cannot agree with Mr. Johnson, that a quibble was the Cleopatra for which he was content to sacrifice the world; since had he made that the sole object of his admiration, he would have lost that world in a very little time instead of keeping it, as he has done for near a couple of centuries, without any thing like the shadow of a competitor.

Having thus animadverted upon Mr. Johnson's capital objections to Shakespear, I shall make one observation upon his defence of that illustrious writer, with respect to the general disregard of unity, which appears in his productions. The unities, or the consistency of times and place, Mr. Johnson seems to think as matters of no great importance in dramatic representations.

sentations. It is impossible, argues this learned commentator, for any spectator to suppose that a stage and a few scenes are in fact either Athens or Rome; and it is also impossible for an auditor to imagine a Timon or a Caesar can now be actually presented to our view, who have been dead such a number of centuries; of consequence, infers Mr. Johnson, the preservation of time or a place can be no way essential, since every body is sensible that the whole representation is nothing more than an agreeable story, calculated entirely for the amusement of the public.

With great deference, however, to Mr. Johnson's sentiments, I must remind him that the principal pleasure, which arises from any play, arises from a supposition of its being a reality. We all know that we sit to see a set of people paid for the public entertainment; yet we also know that unless we insensibly lose every idea of their real persons and employments, we imagine either that they perform extremely ill, or that the play is a very insipid production. If then in the appearance of the actors we wish to see probability preserved, why should we not expect this probability in the circumstance of time and place;—the more probability is kept up, the easier we are deluded into what we wish; and consequently the more properly an author consults the material business of the drama; when we also add to this that the unities may do much good, and cannot possibly be productive of the smallest disadvantage, I don't see how a single argument can be urged in favour of Mr. Johnson's hypothesis, to have the least weight with an intelligent reader.

When



When I look back and see what I have said, I am absolutely struck with my own presumption in contradicting such a writer as Mr. Johnson, but as I am not stimulated either by petulance or vanity, I am tempted to venture it for the public opinion; and perhaps if it should be favourably received, you may hear again from yours, &c.

### ANIMADVERTOR.

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NUMB. CV. *Saturday, January 29.*

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**A**MONG the several branches of oratory which have been lately taught by the celebrated Mr. Sheridan, I am not a little surprised that he has struck out no species of this valuable science for the use of the bar, nor thought of the proper method of instructing a pupil how to become a shining ornament to the long robe, notwithstanding the variety of examples which he might find in this kingdom. Perhaps Mr. Sheridan may suppose a good education, a fortunate memory, and a florid delivery, the principal requisites to form an orator for the bar. If he does, he is very much mistaken; for, to the honour of the present era be it spoken, we are blest with an infinite number of eminent lawyers who have become a credit to the profession without either education or memory, and indeed almost without any delivery at all.

Nor are the gentlemen in question more generally distinguished for their genius and abilities,

ties, than remarkable for their learning and elocution; on the contrary, they are universally acknowledged to be incumbered with no great load of intellectual faculties: a happiness which they themselves seem so sensible of, that they scorn to lay a claim to any qualification besides an inflexible kind of impudence which is known under the fashionable title of the *Bonfrant*.

As I have paid some attention to the customary practice of these gentlemen, especially in the most material of all points, the examination of witnesses upon life and death, I shall take the liberty of laying down some invariable rules for the benefit of students, a tolerable adherence to which is more likely to render them conspicuous at the Bar, than the elocution of a Cicero or the equity of a Yorke.

In the first place, let it be a fundamental maxim, with every student, that a lawyer (who should be a gentleman and a christian) ought upon all occasions, to shew a perfect contempt for decency and good manners, and maintain a audable insensibility to every tender feeling which is a credit to the human breast.—It is beyond the possibility of a doubt, if he lays this principle for the foundation of his conduct, but he must, in a little time, rise to the dignity of a silk gown, and pave a ready way to an ermin'd robe, and a title-giving perriwig.

Upon no account, let a love of justice impertinently intrude itself into his thoughts, or make him imagine a moment, that whatever side of the question he engages to support is not infallibly the best:—Let the robber confessed be supposed an unfortunate sufferer from malice or mistake; the catamite on record a person scandalously accused;

cused ; and the hand yet reeking with the blood of innocence, the instrument of a justice too precipitate, or at most the inflicter, though of an illegal, yet an equitable revenge.

If an evidence compelled to appear against his client gives a testimony fair and unsullied as the soul of truth, every means must be made use of to confound and perplex him ; every expedient of insolence and chicanery practised to make him prevaricate ; and if by some masterly stroke there should be a possibility of making him seem perjured, this violation of all law, this murder of all justice shall save the villain from the gibbet, and render the lawyer immortal.

With regard to evidence there are two methods of examination which must never be forgot : if the person to be examined is a poor ignorant rustic, or some awkward artizan, he must be constantly reminded that he is on his oath, and frightened into an acquiescence with some necessary circumstance, which the council shall good-naturedly make for him, to render the former part of his testimony inconsistent, and occasion the whole to be set aside ; if this should not be sufficient to answer the laudable purpose in view, a number of hard and difficult expressions may be seasonably introduced, the lawyer may also tell him “ *You said so or so, Sir,*” (the confessions which he want him to make) till the poor fellow, terrified at the thoughts of his oath and almost ignorant of what he says, either in his fear or confusion shall acknowledge that he did.

On the contrary, when a gentleman conversant with the principles, though unacquainted with the infamous arts of the law, is to be called as a witness, he must be treated with scurrility and



and abuse; he must be called "*you fellow*," and asked the meaning of every obvious word in order to rouse his indignation and throw him off his guard.—The moment his anger appears, the council in examination, must be sure to keep it up, and by convenient repetitions of the most provoking and derogatory expressions he can think of, render him incapable of giving a clear testimony, and so invalidate every thing he says.

If it is his fortune to be on the side of the Crown, let him follow the method already laid down of examining a witness, and though the prisoner's innocence be apparent as the sun, take every possible means of convicting him, as it will be highly to his reputation if he can get him cast. His abilities receive an additional lustre from his dexterity in the suppression of Justice, and his character will be established for life, if the guiltless unfortunate should be hanged.—Let him moreover sport with the hopes and fears of the unhappy wretch thus tottering on the verge of life, and humanely try every expedient to aggravate his misery, by occasional puns and witticisms on such circumstances in the course of the trial, as may give him the smallest opportunity for a stroke.

There are no ill consequences to be apprehended by any student, and no resentment to be dreaded from the court, from this method of going on; for, now-a-days, lawyers talk before a Bench of Judges, the immediate representatives of God and the KING, with the same illiberal freedom as the respectable Orators of Billingsgate, and use every artifice for the suppression of truth, as if it was criminal for justice to be

be satisfied, and absolutely necessary for *Robbers* and *Murderers* to make a triumphant escape.— In slavish countries indeed, uninspired by a sentiment of liberty and honour, the man who would take upon him to brow beat an evidence, would stand a chance of losing his head, and a Judge who would suffer it, might feel something more than a public disgrace.— But in these happy regions the person insulted in the cause of justice, is the only one exposed to punishment, which he has more than a probability of undergoing, should he have the insolence to complain of being scandalously treated, to the court.

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NUMB. CVI. *Saturday, January 5.*

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**T**HERE is an unaccountable ambition among the generality of people, to enhance the consequence of their posterity, though at their own expence; and there is scarcely a father within the weekly bills, but what, if we are to judge by the mode of his behaviour, thinks his son a considerably better man than himself. I am naturally led into this consideration by a visit which I made to my landlord, an honest carpenter, at the west end of the town, a day or two ago, to talk with him about repairing my house, and to pay him a twelvemonth's rent.

As it was past one o'clock before I set out, I arrived at Mr. Roof's just about dinner time, and without much ceremony sat down with the family to a leg of pork and a pease-pudding, and a couple of fine fowls with egg sauce. The company consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Roof, his

two sons, and a young lady of about nineteen, very elegantly dressed, whom I took for some person that boarded in the house, but who, to my great surprize, I found was no more than my honest landlord's daughter. Mr. Roof and his wife were very plainly decorated, but the two sons had their hair done up in the *alamode à Paris* taste, and wore each a plain blue coat, and a scarlet waistcoat very richly laced with gold. Upon enquiry into the professions to which they were brought up, I found that the eldest was a sort of superintendant to his father, and that the other had, by the recommendation of a nobleman in the neighbourhood, been lately advanced to a fifty pound place in the excise. The young gentlemen I perceived, by their conversation, looked upon themselves in a very consequential light, and so did their sister; they talked of nothing but earls and dukes, and frequently swore upon their honours; whereas their father scarcely mentioned any thing higher than the bricklayer or timber merchant, and never presumed to swear by any thing more elegant than his God.

Dinner was scarcely over, when the young lady and the two gentlemen got up in a careless manner, and took their leaves with a polite elegance, taking care to let me know, however, that they were to drink tea at a gentleman's in New Bond-street, and from thence to adjourn to Covent Garden House to see the Maid of the Mill, having sent a person for that purpose to keep places: "Ay," says the father after their departure, "Suke has been teizing us a long time to see this Opera, and so Bob and Alick being disengaged this evening, they agreed to go



“ go with her, and have sent Ralph Jenkins,  
 “ our youngest apprentice, to keep a row for  
 “ them in one of the green boxes: For my own  
 “ part, my dame and I seldom go above once a  
 “ year, and that is to Dick Yate’s benefit; we  
 “ even then sit in the two shilling gallery, and  
 “ go at half after two, for the sake of getting a  
 “ good place.”

“ But why, Mr. Roof, (says I) do not you  
 “ send Ralph Jenkins to keep a place for your-  
 “ self and your good woman in the boxes at the  
 “ same time; it would be much more com-  
 “ fortable than going so very early, and running  
 “ the chance of being squeezed to death, by  
 “ crouding into the two shilling gallery?”

“ Why, Lord, Sir, (returned my honest land-  
 “ lord) you do not think it would become a poor  
 “ carpenter to be elbowing it among people of  
 “ fashion in the boxes! No, no, I am sure you  
 “ know a great deal better than that, and have  
 “ only a mind to be a little merry with me.”

“ You bring your eldest son I think, Mr.  
 “ Roof, up to your own business?” “ Yes,  
 “ Sir; and a cleverer lad never stepped in shoe-  
 “ leather; he shall draw a plan, or make an  
 “ estimate with any carpenter in the kingdom;  
 “ Nay, with Phillips himself, though every body  
 “ must allow him to be an honour to the bu-  
 “ siness: And then if he was put to it to-mor-  
 “ row, he could get his bread as a journeyman;  
 “ why, Sir, I had him the matter of four years  
 “ at the bench.”

“ Well then, Mr. Roof, is not your son a  
 “ carpenter too?” “ Undoubtedly, Sir.” “ Then  
 “ if it be improper for you as a carpenter, to sit  
 “ in the boxes among the persons of quality,  
 “ must

“ must it not of course be equally as improper  
“ for him ? ”

“ Ay, Sir, consider he dresses in a very differ-  
“ ent manner from me, and that you know will  
“ make it overlooked.”

“ True, Mr. Roof, but do not you look upon  
“ yourself to be as good a man as your son ? ”

“ To be sure I do, Sir.”

“ Why then, Mr. Roof, do not you dress as  
“ well as your son ? ”

“ Why, because I do not think it would be-  
“ come my station.”

“ Then give me leave to ask you, Mr. Roof,  
“ why you suffer your son to run into an error  
“ which you are so sensible as to avoid it yourself ?  
“ Young men, you know, are naturally inclined  
“ to be vain ; and indulgences of this nature,  
“ where a young man is obliged to live by his  
“ industry, very often disqualify him for trade ;  
“ as he dresses like a gentleman, he is ambitious  
“ of appearing like a gentleman in every respect ;  
“ and will consequently aim at being equally  
“ idle and extravagant :—This is one great er-  
“ or which I think many tradesmen (excuse me  
“ my worthy friends, for it is my friendship  
“ makes me speak) run into : As if their sons  
“ were better men than themselves, they dress  
“ them a thousand times better ; and not only  
“ add by this means to their constitutional va-  
“ nity, but give them an early turn to idleness  
“ and expence : The circumstance of youth can  
“ be no extenuation of the conduct ; because,  
“ if there be a degree of distinction any where  
“ due, it is to age, which is entitled to a much  
“ greater share of veneration and respect.”

Finding

Finding the conversation rather awkward to my landlord, I changed the subject; but have the pleasure of informing my readers that Mr. Roof has since, with his own hands, ripped the lace off the young gentlemen's waistcoats, and has positively ordered his daughter never to appear in his sight with a sack.

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NOMB. CVII. Saturday, February 12.

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To the BABLER.

SIR,

THERE is no subject which at present employs the pens of our essayists so much as *Luxury*. Every writer who is desirous of shewing a profound knowledge either in ethics or in policy, exclaims against it as a vice replete with the most dreadful consequences; and insists, that it will one time or other be the utter destruction of this infatuated kingdom.

Though I am very sensible luxury is the common parent of many considerable evils, I am at the same time perfectly satisfied, it is the common parent also of the first blessings in every society; for which reason I must differ widely in opinion from those ingenious gentlemen, who are for having it totally suppressed; and must not only express my wonder at the tendency of their arguments, but even insist that such a circumstance, so far from being desirable, would be the inevitable ruin of every civilized kingdom.

The



The enemies of luxury in all the arguments I have hitherto met with, seem to consider this vice, as they call it, on no more than one side: they tell us it leads us into a thousand excesses, bursts frequently through all the laws of humanity, and excites so strong a propensity to pleasures and parade, that reason is never able to govern our actions, and but seldom powerful enough to keep us from the commission of any crime which has an appearance of promoting this general depravity or voluptuousness of our inclinations. With all possible deference, however, to the opinion of these gentlemen, I shall beg leave to ask if by a state of nature they mean that original condition of mankind, when their food was the herbage of the field, and their drink the water of the spring; when their covering was the skin of some leopard, and their couch the naked lap of earth; when, in short, though possessed of extensive regions, they were scarcely possessed of any thing; and wandered, to use the poet's expression, with their only acquaintance the beasts,

*Joint tenants of the shade.*

In those early ages before luxury was born, do we not read of continual frauds, oppressions, and murders? Do we not find that when there were but two brothers in the whole compass of creation, one of them killed the other through envy, and hurled the boldest defiance to the very throne of his God.

The principal argument which political writers have ever brought against luxury, is, that it imbecillitates the mind of every body, and from  
gaining

gaining a universal ascendancy, sinks a whole state at last into a degree of softness and effeminacy, which renders it utterly unfit for warlike enterprizes; and consequently exposes it to the machinations of every enemy. The Romans, say these gentlemen, while they continued undebauched by luxury could conquer the whole world; that is, in plain English, they could rob and murder the nations of the earth, through an infamous principle of avarice, which they varnished over with the name of glory.—Truly a blessed effect arising from this boasted disregard of luxury!—But when (continue these sagacious reasoners) they once suffered this vice to gain footing among them, that moment they lost all their usual ardour, and were incapable of performing those heroic achievements which raised their ancestors to immortality; that is, to explain this principle of argument still farther; being by this time polished into something like humanity, they no longer had a passion for rapine or blood, but let other people enjoy peace and tranquillity for the sake of enjoying so invaluable a blessing themselves. And this is one of the dreadful effects arising from the prevalence of luxury. Truly a very proper subject for a moralist to complain of, who feels for the private distresses of his country, or the general good of all mankind.

In every age since the commencement of English literature, poor luxury has been an everlasting topic, but, as I said before, for our moral and political writers. The first have been continually talking how prejudicial it must prove to individuals; and the latter have been as continually mentioning how fatal it must inevitably turn out to kingdoms: yet what a pity is it that universal  
experience

experience gives so palpable a contradiction to all their declamations! Great Britain, I grant, has for many years been absorbed in luxury, yet that luxury has rendered us no way effeminate. In the late war we convinced our enemies that the most hardy æras of the Romans republic did not exceed us in valour; and possibly should hostilities re-commence to-morrow, we should give them this conviction again with the greatest alacrity.

With regard to individuals, luxury may in some measure be considered as the immediate source of their existence. Every thing beyond the absolute necessities of life is luxury: what then would become of our merchants without it? Our commerce would in an instant be annihilated, and our manufactures totally destroyed. People of fashion, instead of encouraging the sciences and the arts, would be hedging in the country; and our poets, painters, musicians, mercers, jewellers, and in short every person of every profession would be reduced to much such a situation as the savages of America. For these reasons therefore let us not rail against luxury; if in some cases it gives us desires above our situation, and hurries us into excesses, let us on the other hand look upon it as the only parent of trade, and the general support of society; above all let the enemies of luxury be a little consistent with themselves, and recollect, that when they advise us to grow rich by a close application to our commerce, they in fact, advise us to be luxurious, unless they can prove that it is criminal to enjoy this wealth after we have acquired it; and that it is to decline the gratification of our wishes, that we so incessantly labour for the means. I am, Sir, &c.

A VOLUPTUARY.



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NUMB. CVIII. *Saturday, February 19.*

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**I**F we take an accurate view of the world, and make a just observation upon the various characters it abounds with, we shall find those which in general attract our greatest admiration, seldom if ever entitled to our esteem; and those which work the strongest upon our wonder, the least entitled to our love. The glare of heroism or dignity only dazzles our imagination, whereas the milder virtues of domestic life never fatigue upon the sight, but on the contrary, like a beautiful landscape, supply us with everlasting charms, and encrease upon the fancy the more they are enjoyed. The reader will easily see from the following letter, which my nephew Harry (who constantly acquaints me with every thing) lately received from Charles Hastings, a young fellow of his acquaintance, how I have been led into the foregoing reflexion.

To H. R A T T L E, *Esq;*

*Dear Harry,*

**S**INCE my return to Gloucestershire, a most melancholy circumstance has happened in poor Dr. Winterton's family, our old tutor, which I scarce know how to communicate, on account of some little concern which I have had in the consequences; but as I am sensible you will not imagine I have any self-sufficient motive

tive to gratify by the relation, I shall proceed to the particulars, without any further apology.

Dr. Winterton had, it seems, gone indiscreetly as a security for his wife's brother, in a much larger sum than his circumstances could possibly bear, and the brother, being a villain, thought proper to make off a few days before the money became due; the obdurate creditor insisted upon instant satisfaction, and the doctor being unable to give it him, all his little effects were cruelly seized, and he himself thrown into the county gaol.

The circumstance reached my ear the third day after I went down, and though you know I have very little reason to be an admirer either of the doctor or his family, as I lost my uncle Goodwin's estate by the ill-natured representation which they gave the best action of my life, my setting our old school-fellow Raymond's sister up in a milliner's shop; yet I determined to interest myself a little in his affairs; and thought it ungenerous to remember any thing in the day of an enemy's calamity, but the greatness of his distress. Accordingly I got an intimate friend of his to prepare him for my visit, and called on him the next day: the unhappy man scarcely knew how to receive me; Mrs. Winterton affected to be very busy in setting the room to order; Miss made an excuse for absenting herself; the three other daughters never took their eyes from some plain work, about which they were employed; and the only person who seemed rejoiced at my coming, was poor little Tommy, who is grown a most charming boy since you saw him; he ran to me the moment I came in; and crying, ah! Mr. Hastings,

ings, seized hold of my coat, and hung on me with a degree of innocent sensibility, that almost melted me into tears.

As I heartily felt for the situation of the doctor, I embraced the first opportunity of taking him to an apartment of the gaolers, where I might offer him my service, without disconcerting him in the face of his family: I did so in the least offensive manner I was capable, and when I found him touched about his treatment of me to my uncle Goodwin, made use of every argument to reconcile him to himself, and applauded the goodness of his intention, without lamenting the consequence which it had produced: By degrees I restored him to some appearance of cheerfulness; assured him, I heartily sympathized in his misfortunes, and begged, in a manner the most open I could assume, that he would tax my ability in the present exigence. To a mind not utterly destitute of feeling, my dear Harry, no circumstance is so afflictive as an obligation from a person whom we have wronged; this I fully saw manifested in our old friend: He blushed incessantly, changed his seat every moment, still attempting to apologize for former occurrences; till at last, incapable of holding it out any longer, he snatched my hand, kissed it with vehemence, and burst into a violent flood of tears. In fact, Harry, I was as much to be pitied as himself: I was afraid every thing would carry the appearance of a triumph; and therefore studiously avoided whatever I considered as tending to so unmanly a behaviour. This enhanced the little merit of my conduct with him; and the more I endeavoured to avoid giving him an anxiety, the more I added to his distress.

I will



I will not dwell on the minuter parts of this transaction ; suffice it, by advancing four hundred and fifty-seven pounds, I have brought him and his whole family back to the parsonage house ; and am amply overpaid by a consciousness which I flatter myself is no way culpable, I mean that of having discharged a duty both as a christian and as a man. I shall be in town the first day of term, till when, my dear Rattle, adieu, and believe me to be with an unalterable esteem your own

CHARLES HASTINGS.

When I see the immense sum which people of fortune daily squander in search of felicity, I am astonished to think how any man with a glimmer of understanding can think of recurring to the customary methods of obtaining it, when the secret conviction of his own heart, points out the most eligible means : What is the winning of a thousand battles ? What is the possession of a thousand thrones, to the performance of a single action like this ? If universal applause is our ambition, virtue leads on to the immediate possession of our wish ; and while the trappings of pomp and precedence gain a cursory plaudit from our follies, she with the milder lustre of one meritorious circumstance, commands an everlasting admiration from our hearts ! It is in every man's power to throw the conquerors of the world at a distance in honest reputation ; a humanity of temper outweighs a universe in value ; and an immortality is to be purchased by a proper application of the smallest sum, which the giddy profusion of our nobility daily risks upon a single card.

NUMB.

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NUMB. CIX. *Saturday, February 26.*

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**T**HOUGH no body is better pleased to see a husband place a proper degree of confidence in his wife than myself, nor wishes more ardently to have the married ladies treated with delicacy and affection; yet there is one situation in which I am frequently sorry to find them distinguished with extraordinary marks of regard, and in which I think it would be much more for the credit of our understandings rather to doubt of their discretion, than to suppose it impossible for them to run into capital mistakes.—The situation which I here mean, is, where at our deaths, though we have a number of children, we rely implicitly on the tenderness of our wives, and leave our whole fortunes entirely in their power, from a preposterous opinion, that they will faithfully employ every shilling for the benefit of these children, and be actuated by no other view, than a maternal concern for their happiness.

It is true when we consider the natural softness of the female character, and recollect with what an aching intenseness of sensibility, a mother generally beholds her own offspring; when we see a woman's life apparently depending on a child, and have beside for a long series of years experienced in her fidelity, every possible proof of a worthy heart, and a clear understanding; it appears unaccountable that we should entertain any doubts of her tenderness, in those last impor-

tant moments, where all her feelings must be tremblingly alive for the loss of a worthy husband, and where the unprotected situation of her little orphans, demands a double share of her affection.——Experience, however, fatally convinces us, that we cannot rely with any tolerable certainty upon the conduct of the ladies in general :——Neither their esteem for the memory of a man whom they once idolized ; nor their fondness for the very children in whom they seemed only to exist, are sufficient to preserve them from sacrificing every thing which ought to be dear to a woman of sense and humanity ; the moment their tears are a little dried up, their hearts become susceptible of second impressions ; and their unfortunate poor innocents are infamously plundered, to obtain the possession of some insidious admirer whom they have not known perhaps a week, and whose principal adoration was excited by their fortunes.

I am insensibly led into this subject by an application which was made to me for charity yesterday morning, from a woman once the wife of my old acquaintance Tom Easy ; Tom was bred at Oxford, in the neighbourhood of which city, he fell accidentally in company with this lady, the daughter of an obscure clergyman, and being smitten with her person married her at once, not regarding in the least her utter want of fortune ;—happily for Tom, his father, who was a merchant in London, died before this marriage was discovered, otherwise it might have greatly endangered his inheritance ; however on taking possession of the old gentleman's estate, which consisted of money in the funds to a very large amount, he brought Mrs. Easy to town,

set



set up an elegant equipage, and lived away in a manner entirely suitable to the affluence of his circumstances. I have dined more than once at his house, and never beheld a more affectionate husband.—His whole study was to guard his wife from the uneasiness even of a wish, and three charming little prattlers, with which she blest him, so absolutely rivetted her empire over his heart, that he often broke out into tears of exquisite tenderness, if he gazed at her with any extraordinary share of attention.—Uncommon as these marks of regard might be considered, Mrs. Easy, nevertheless seemed to merit them all; during the whole seventeen years of her marriage, she never knew a will but her husband's, nor ever passed a moment in the most fashionable places of pleasure, with a fiftieth part of that satisfaction, which she received at home from her little family.—During Tom's last illness she sat up with him for seven weeks, and when, through the incredible distresses of her mind and the excessive fatigues of her person, she was at last rendered unable to move across the room, she had a mattraß brought to her husband's bedside, where she constantly echoed to his groans, and answered in a perpetual unison to these sorrows which she could no longer attend upon, with the medicines of relief.

Such unexampled proofs of conjugal attachment deserved every mark of the most grateful acknowledgment, and Mr. Easy accordingly rewarded it with every shilling he was worth in the world, and died perfectly satisfied that so excellent a woman could never deviate in the least from the just regard which was due to her children.—But alas, poor Tom was not buried

ten weeks before this very woman gave her person and fortune to an Irish gambler; and threw both herself and her children entirely upon the capricious bounty of a rascal who was as totally lost to shame, as he was destitute of humanity; the consequence of this unpardonable step will be easily conceived by the reader of imagination; in less than six months Mr. Easy's three children were turned out of doors by the merciless step-father.—A subscription was however raised among some friends for their support, and they were all put out to professions, in which they have a genteel expectation of earning their own bread.—But as to the wretched mother, she was marked out for a fate of much greater severity; after the barbarous expulsion of her children, her hopeful husband, gave her the modest alternative, either of going about her business also, or of waiting upon a strumpet in her own house, with whom he had been many years connected.—The latter part of this proposal, incredible as it may seem, she rather chose to accept, than to part entirely with the company of a villain, who had brought such destruction on her family:—Though he was detestable to her justice, he was nevertheless dear to her heart, and she thought it better to undergo every shame and every mortification, than to be totally banished from his sight.—A woman who could act as she did, deserv'd to be treated as she was; for three whole years she lived the most miserable of all slaves to her husband's mistress; underwent all the various rounds of insult, which could possibly be thrown upon her by the brutality of his profligate companions—till at last the Hibernian's death, in a duel, which was occasioned by a reflexion

flexion upon his honour, at the moment he was detected in cogging a die, set her free; but left her wholly without support; for her fortunate rival, the moment she heard of his death, seized upon all his money and papers, sold off the house and furniture by virtue of a will, which she had for some time in her possession, and ran away with another Irish gambler, before the unfortunate wretch who was best entitled to every thing, could take any steps in her own defence, or even recover from that extravagance of grief in which she was plunged, by the loss of a villain, so utterly unworthy of her affection.

Is it necessary to argue with a sensible man, about trusting his fortune entirely to a wife, after I have told him the foregoing story? If it is, I must pity the weakness of his understanding, or he must tax me with a total want of abilities.



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NUMB. CX. *Saturday, March 5.*

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**T**HE subject of my last number has brought me the following letter from a reader, who seems a young fellow of so much merit and good sense, that I am doubly sensible of his misfortunes.

*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**I** Received no little satisfaction, from your strictures on the absurdities of those husbands, who through a ridiculous confidence in the tenderness and discretion of a wife, at their deaths, invest her entirely with their fortunes, and trust the welfare of their children, wholly to the precarious continuance of her affection, or the casual rectitude of her principles;—I am, sir, the unfortunate son of such an inconsiderate father, and am starving upon a fifty pound place in the Customs, while the offspring of a stranger are rioting in his wealth, and vying in appearance with the first nobility, on what should be properly considered my inheritance.

My father, sir, was an attorney of great practice in the city, lived universally beloved, and died as universally lamented; my mother and he had been married above sixteen years, and a more affectionate couple was not to be met with in the kingdom, that he had at least the most cordial  
tenderness

tenderness for her, appeared sufficiently evident, at the time of his decease, for he left his whole fortune entirely in her power, and assigned it as a reason for his conduct, that his disconsolate relict would be sure of my duty, when all my expectations depended upon her hand:—But alas, sir, while he was thus doubtful of my behaviour to her, he did not consider the possibility of her swerving in any points of affection to me; he did not consider that a woman with a large fortune in her pocket, whether she is handsome or homely, in the may-bloom of life, or in the declining vale of years, is always certain of numerous admirers; he did not moreover recollect that my mother was scarcely thirty-five; that she was remarkably pleasing in her person; and that consequently she had attractions which were liable to cause a change in her condition, even without the greatest of all attractions, the inefable beauty of her purse.

Be this, however, as it may, the excessive concern, which my mother testified for the loss of her husband, and the determined energy, even sometimes of execration with which she exclaimed against a second marriage, induced numbers to think that my father was not altogether so preposterous in his will, especially as I was a smart boy of fifteen, rather tall for my age, and seemed entirely to engross my mother's affection—But as *Hamlet* finely observes,

“*Frailty! thy name is woman.*”

A little time, lessened the good lady's detestation to second marriages; in about three months she wanted company, and to remove this disagreeable circumstance, admitted of visits from a few particular acquaintance; in less than half a

year, she could smile at a compliment to her looks, though she was sensible "no body could like such an old woman as her;" and before the turn of the third quarter, out of pure humanity, bestowed her hand upon a handsome young fellow, without a shilling, who had sworn to destroy himself, if she repulsed his addressee, and who doubtless was a man of too much honour, to be worse than his word.

To do my father-in-law justice however, tho' he was a poor man, his reputation was unsullied, and he was neither destitute of sense nor humanity; so that for some time I fared tolerably well, and received many little instances of his good nature and affection; but unhappily, sir, before the expiration of a year after the wedding-day, my mother was brought to bed of a fine boy; and I was no longer considered with any remarkable share of attention; on the contrary, the birth of this little stranger rendered me a kind of interloper in the family, and it was looked upon as a mighty obligation, that I was allowed the common necessities of life, out of my misguided father's fortune.—As I was young and naturally impetuous, a treatment of this kind, frequently led me into complaints, which however justly they might be founded, were certainly injudicious, because they might encrease the difficulties of my situation, but could not possibly procure me the smallest redress.—They were also attended with this inconvenience, that they exposed me to the censures of the world—for as long as I had a decent subsistence, it was thought by numbers the highest instance of ingratitude to my father-in-law, that I presumed to find fault.—In this uncomfortable manner things continued



nued to go on till my mother was brought to bed of another child, about which time my father-in-law procured me a fifty pound place in the Customs, and desired me to shift for myself.

It is now five years, Mr. Babler, since I obtain'd this trifling independence, and you may be sure that I must have practis'd the most rigid oeconomy to support myself with any tolerable decency in these difficult times; I am indeed welcome to a dinner occasionally at my mother's, but a single guinea I have never received either from her or her husband, since the time I quitted the house to the present hour—Both of them behave with civility enough, but neither with any degree of affection; all their tenderness is confined to the young children; and every sixpence of my poor father's money, is to be set apart for those who are strangers to his name and aliens to his family; my step-brothers, and there are now no less than four, will have five thousand pounds a-piece, while I who should in justice possess the whole after my mother's decease, must probably sit down with an humble suit of mourning, or even a paltry pair of gloves.

I have introduced this little narrative, Mr. Babler, to shew that where widows of fortune, who have children by a first husband, even are happy in a second choice, and bestow their persons on a man who treats them with the utmost tenderness, the children of the former husband must nevertheless be material sufferers; no people live together upon better terms than my mother and my father-in-law, yet I am injured in the highest degree notwithstanding the reciprocity of their affection: The property which should

have been mine, is now my father-in-law's entirely, and it is but reasonable he should give every preference to his own children:—Nay, supposing my mother had still retained every thing in her own hands, the issue of her second marriage, is as dear to her as the offspring of the first, and my father's substance would even in that case be divided to make an establishment for the posterity of a stranger at the manifest expence of his own.—Thus, Mr. Babler, you see it is dangerous at any rate for a man to leave his children dependant on the discretion of a wife; especially when we see the person thus trusted with the management of their interest, so generally incapable of acting for herself. If this letter is no improper supplement to your last paper, print it, and believe me,

Your's very sincerely,

H O R A T I O.

NUMB.

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NUMB. CXI. *Saturday, March 12.*

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*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**T**HOUGH the observation is not over new, it is nevertheless extremely just, that the life of man is marked by dissatisfaction, and that in the most flourishing situation of our circumstances, we are still pretty certain to repine under the hand of discontent.

I was educated for the church, Mr. Babler, and having but small expectation of preferment, I endeavoured pretty successfully to accommodate my mind to the narrowness of my expectations, and flattered myself that I should be the happiest man in the world, could I get but a curacy of fifty pounds a year—on this I thought, I could provide every thing in a handsome manner, and when I was fortunate enough to be appointed to an income of such a sum, I actually lived for some time highly to my satisfaction; had a decent apartment, owed no man a shilling, and never wanted those two capital essentials in the compound of sublunary felicity, a mortuary guinea and a clean shirt.

I had not however been long in possession of my curacy, before an increase of acquaintance brought on an increase of wants; I found that I had deceived myself when I thought of circumscribing my wishes within such a trifle as  
fifty



fifty pounds: A hundred I then aspired at, with all the eagerness my character could possibly admit, and was certain that this sum would entirely answer all my wishes.—Well Sir, this hundred was at last obtained, and I set myself down for an uninterrupted round of happiness.—But see the futility of all human expectations; my desires were again increased with my fortune, and though my circumstances were now doubled, I did not find myself in the least richer than when I was confined to my humble fifty pounds—What was still more extraordinary, I did not live a bit better than formerly; I seldom had more than the same simple joint of meat, and the same moderate glass of punch as usual. My dress could undergo scarce any alteration; and as I still lived in the country, and was a bachelor, I had no great occasion to enhance the elegance of my apartment—My expences therefore were accumulated in mere articles of dissipation which could be of little service to myself, and of less advantage to society; I received continued invitations from some of the families round my parish, to pass an evening, and to make one at a party of cards; here I generally lost a shilling or two every night, and as I was above living upon any body, I now and then requested the company of my hospitable friends, bachelor as I was, with their whole families; by this means, though I resided in a very cheap part of the country, the profits of my parish were commonly eaten up, by the time they became due, and I found myself even in a more embarrassed situation, than when I had but half the same revenue for my support.

I now

I now began to think, Mr. Babler, that a hundred pounds a year was infinitely too small an allowance, for the maintenance of any gentleman, and therefore as my person was not very disagreeable, I fancied matrimony as the most likely expedient to arrive at competence and content; in pursuance of this opinion, I accordingly looked out for a wife with money, and in a short time had the good fortune to marry a very deserving woman with eight thousand pounds—Possessed of such a handsome sum, I considered it as nothing more than a proper compliment to my wife, to live away for some time, and therefore set up a smart post-chaise, and acquired an additional share of respect through the whole neighbourhood. But alas, Sir, while I kept my post-chaise, I was obliged to make a suitable appearance in every other article of my expence—My table was furnished sumptuously, and those who were formerly among my most intimate acquaintance, now thought me too great for their company; and instead of those cordial salutes of unaffected regard, which I was once secure of receiving in every quarter, I met with nothing but a distant bow of lifeless respect: This revolution however it gave me uneasiness, apparently gratified the pride of my wife; she, like the generality of her sex, was fond of glitter and parade, and openly rejoiced that we were extending the elegant circle of our visitors: she piqued herself particularly on giving the best entertainments of any body in the country, and never saw a new gown or a fresh ornament upon her friends, but what she was certain of having a richer silk, or a more valuable trinket, to appear in if possible the next Sunday.—Thus, Mr. Babler,

Babler, the number of wants which followed the enlargement of my circumstances, reduced me to my original situation, and I had just as much money to command when possessed of five hundred a year, as I was master of at my first setting out.

My lot, Sir, is however infinitely more uncomfortable, if I lessen my port, or disengage myself from the company of those with whom I have associated since my marriage, I am sure of being treated with ridicule or contempt; besides to let your readers into a secret, I am what many wiser men than myself have been in all ages, nothing more than the second person in my own house. Mrs. Cassock, you must know, has a great spirit: she is also of a good family, and as every thing originally proceeded from her, I think her rather entitled to some indulgences. For these reasons, though I could perhaps stand the severest bolts of ridicule, I am fearful to propose any salutary reduction in my expences; and yet, Sir, the difficulty I have to make matters meet in the end is inconceivable; with all this swellingness of appearance, I am frequently obliged to expose my necessities, and to borrow twenty or thirty pounds from some of those very people whose acquaintance the vanity of my wife has so foolishly thrown off. Our high-bred friends must not for the world be made acquainted that we want a sum of money till the four per cents. are paid at the bank in London.—That would lessen us for ever in their esteem; but we can meanly stoop to solicit a favour from those whom we have insulted; and become absolute suitors for the occasional good nature of the people  
whom



whom we have treated with the most insuperable contempt.

—This, Mr. Babler, to a man of any sensibility is a very grating situation—I am a beggar in the midst of affluence, and by too prodigal a use of those favours with which providence has been pleased to bless me, I feel all the wants of the most pungent distress. I am sensible what steps I ought to pursue, yet actually want the resolution to be right; and though I know that a gaol must be my inevitable portion in two or three years, without I immediately alter my plan of living, still the fear of giving uneasiness to a woman I love, unmans my temper, and I am rather more inclined to suffer even such a disgrace, than to give her any occasion to suspect either my gratitude or my love.

Now, Sir, that I have wrote this letter I scarcely know for what purpose; but as it may possibly warn giddy-headed people from extravagance at their first setting out in the world; and shew your readers that the man who would be truly happy must always live within the limits of his circumstances, I shall even send it to you, and am your very humble servant,

CHRISTOPHER CASSOCK.

NUMB.

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NUMB. CXII. *Saturday, March 19.*

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*To the* BABLER.

S I R,

**I**F the gentleman who wrote the last letter in your entertaining paper, has reason to complain of his lady's spirit as the cause of an impoverishment in his circumstances, you will think my case a still more extraordinary, as well as a still more lamentable one, who am actually undoing, by the œconomy of a wife, and have the pleasure of hearing my Turtle continually expatiating on the mighty merits of her prudence and management, in proportion as she pushes me still nearer to the verge of destruction.

My entrance into the world, Mr. Babler, was as promising as most people's. I had a good two thousand a year to my fortune, and my wife, who was the only daughter of an antient family, brought me thirty thousand pounds: possessed of such an affluence one would scarce imagine that my circumstances could have been prejudiced by the prudent management of my helpmate; or suppose that any thing but the most unbounded prodigality could, in less than three years, run me behind hand in the full sum of fifty thousand pounds.

My wife, Mr. Babler, is descended from a family, the female branches of which have for many years been distinguished by some remarkable peculiarity; her great grandmother in  
Charles

Charles the second's time, cured the best hams in all England; her grandmother never wore any ribbands but orange colour after the revolution. Her aunt Molly always rode her horse like a man, and her mother never sat down to a knuckle of veal without eating two pounds; Sukey, at a very early age, was discovered to have her peculiarity too: in her little intercourses with her play-fellows, she would purchase all their toys at an inferior rate, and wait with the nicest circumspection till she saw a wax-doll very visibly wanting in a young lady's affection. By this means she became mistress of more play-things than all her acquaintance put together, and established in the minds of her doating relations such extraordinary ideas of her sagacity as made them regard her with an equal degree of tenderness and admiration.

The same peculiarity which distinguished her early years, now continues to mark her conduct, and her whole study is to obtain what the world calls a *bargain*, without ever considering whether she has the least occasion in nature for the commodity which she purchases; hence, she is eternally running from auction to auction, from broker to broker, and from shop to shop. Wherever there is the least probability of coming at a bargain, they are always sure of Mrs. Busy's company, and it is a matter of little consequence whether she bids for a piece of porcelain, or an hog'shead of tobacco, a Michael Angelo, or a parcel of salt beef—Let there be but the appearance of a bargain, let her only know that the thing is sold beneath its intrinsic value, and that is a temptation not to be withstood; she strikes off an agreement at once, and kindly leaves



leaves the payment of the money to poor pill garlick.

Through this unaccountable humour, Mr. Babler, I have scarce a room in my house but what is crammed with some of Mrs. Busy's æconomical purchases. I have more china, Sir, than is requisite to fit out an East-Indiaman in her return, and more glass than the largest manufactory in England. I have above three thousand Turkey carpets rotting in my garrets, and five hundred dozen of as good buck handled knives and forks rusting in my cellars, as ever attacked a buttock of beef, or an apple dumpling. In short, Sir, notwithstanding all the heaps of money which Mrs. Busy has squandered in the prosecution of her ridiculous propensity, she has not laid out so large a sum as five pounds upon any one article that could either be of the least use, or the smallest elegance in her family. On the contrary, her purchases have been chiefly trumpery, which were lessened in their value by neglect, and owed the mighty merit of their cheapness to the universal contempt in which they were held by every sensible chapman.

I do not send you this little narrative, Mr. Babler, with a view of working upon the temper of my wife, or the pity of your readers. As to my wife, I have talked often enough to her, to know the inefficacy of the soundest reasonings; and as to your readers, I neither want their pity nor desire it. My sole motive for this publication is, to inform the world that for the future I shall not be answerable for her whimsies. That I shall not receive a single article from any place with the following inscriptions: "Now selling  
" by auction.—The stock of a tradesman quit-  
" ting

"ting business.—Parting with, below prime  
"cost;" and a number of equally significant  
insinuations to take in the thoughtless, or the  
ignorant. The proprietors of these places may  
look out for other dupes, as I am determined  
they shall never get another sixpence of my mo-  
ney, unless it be personally contracted for by,

Sir, your's; &c.

BENJAMIN BUSY.

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NUMB. CXIII. *Saturday, March 26.*

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**L**OOKING over Doddsley's collection of  
poems a day or two ago, I met with the  
following little ode, which, though there is no-  
thing more than a prettiness in the versification,  
nevertheless contains such an uncommon degree  
of benignity in the sentiment, as must fill every  
reader with the highest admiration for the excel-  
lence of the writer's heart; if he should even con-  
ceive but a slender idea of his poetical abilities.

ODE to CANDOUR.

I.

The dearest friend I ever prov'd,  
My bitterest foe I see,  
The fondest maid I ever lov'd,  
Is false to love and me.

II. Yet

## II.

Yet shall I urge the rising vow,  
That tempts my wav'ring mind;  
Shall dark suspicion cloud my brow,  
And bid me shun mankind?

## III.

Avaunt thou hell-born fiend—no more  
Presume my steps to guide;  
Let me be cheated o'er and o'er  
But let me still confide.

## IV.

If this be folly all my claim  
To wisdom I resign;  
But let no sage pretend to name  
His happiness with mine.

Nothing is more customary with most people, than when they themselves have made an injudicious choice either in friendship or in love, to exclaim at once against the world; and to declare that no consideration shall ever induce them to honour any body with their good opinion a second time; in pursuance of this strange resolution, they act as if every body was unworthy of a place in their esteem; and make the behaviour of a single individual an invariable standard for the integrity of the whole universe. Hence they are continually tortured with the severest pangs of anxiety and suspicion: wear away their existence in an open warfare with society; and die as unlamented as they have lived unbeloved.

A sensible



A sensible mind should, however, consider that the tempers of mankind are not less opposite than their various complexions; and that nothing can be a greater act of injustice, than to entertain an ungenerous apprehension of our whole acquaintance, merely because we have been deceived by any particular one. If we examine into the general course of our connexions, whether they are founded upon friendship or established upon love, we shall find that so far from having any right to quarrel with the world, the world will upon the whole appear not a little entitled to our regard, since in the general, we meet with a much greater share of sincerity both in friendship and in love, than what from the ridiculous nature of our attachments, we have any probable reason to expect.

Now a days what is it which forms the foundation of our friendships or constitutes the basis of our loves? Is it a similarity in our manners or an agreement in our pursuits; a conformity in our virtues, or a resemblance in our crimes? Alas these questions if candidly answered, must load us with confusion and reproach. In the choice of our friends it is not an excellence of understanding or a benignity of heart, which produces our intimacy, or attracts our esteem. It is not the suggestion of our virtues which is consulted in the choice of our friends, but the depravity of our inclinations: does a man drink a bottle more than the generality of our companions—good—that man is a very honest fellow—and very proper to be set down as a friend: does another tell a story, sing a song—or spend the substance of other people with an uncommon degree of spirit? Better and better,—there  
can

can be no doubt of his worth; and we clap him in our hearts *core*, as Hamlet has it, in our *heart of hearts*: or has a third butchered his neighbour in some scandalous quarrel, arising from the outrageous excess of midnight profligacy? Best of all—Such a friend is inestimable—An intimacy with him is not more flattering to our pride than agreeable to our wishes; we mention his heroism upon every occasion and in proportion to the closeness of our acquaintance, we constantly claim a share in the lustre of his reputation.

In like manner where we form a still nearer connexion than friendship is capable of admitting; when we absolutely look about for wives; by what salutary standard do we regulate our inclinations? Will not a tolerable face have more weight with us than the most exalted understanding; and will not a tolerable fortune appear of more consequence than the united recommendation of all the mental accomplishments? When these things are notoriously so, what are we to expect but shame and disappointment; but mortification and regret? At a situation like this, who are we to find fault with but ourselves? If we trust our property to the hands of a robber, can we expect it to be safe? And if we lodge our confidence or our felicity in the bosoms of the worthless, what greater security can we possibly hope to find, either for the prodigal deposit of our friendships, or for the frantic repose of our affections? Instead therefore of quarrelling with the world for deceiving us so often, we should acknowledge ourselves obliged that we are not deceived still oftener; our connexions for the most part are injudicious, and consequently should be for the most part unfortunate; yet,

yet, for the honour of human nature, be it mentioned, the world is not so ready to deceive as we are to let it; nor are our acquaintance half so much disposed to be villains as we are disposed to be fools. Let us not therefore, because we ourselves are profligate or ridiculous, impeach the integrity of other people; if we have a mind to be fortunate in our friendships, or happy in our loves; let us not form attachments according to the advice of our passions, but according to the direction of our reason; the wise and the virtuous are those which still stand the test of the closest examination; and these are the only people whom reason will ever point out as entitled in the least to our esteem or our affection.

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NUMB. CXIV. *Saturday, April 2.*

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*To the* B A B L E R.

S I R,

**I** MAKE no doubt, Sir, but the conduct of a weekly essay must be very troublesome, and that a great part of your labours are unseen; spent in efforts that produce nothing; and thrown away upon subjects that are found barren in the experiment.

If you should at any time be at a loss for a subject, I flatter myself, you would find something new in the history of those obscure ages, which modern readers have hitherto thought unworthy  
of



of their curiosity, and which lie deserted because unknown.

The history of the unfortunate Arantes and Aspasia is among this number, and though their epitaph at Lyons in France, has been printed in our books of travels, yet their story at length is but little known.

Arantes was son to the governor of one of the Mediterranean islands, and favoured with all the advantages of nature, fortune and education. Aspasia was a Greek lady, beautiful beyond expression, and admired by all the youth of Athens, which was then the place of concourse for all the polite of the Roman empire.

Their mutual merit soon produced a mutual esteem, and this was after some time converted into the most ardent passion. They both indulged the hopes of being happy in each other for life, when Arantes returning home to obtain his father's consent, was taken by a pirate, sold into the internal parts of Africa, and there condemned to toil with the most unremitting severity.

In the mean time Aspasia felt all that love and impatience could inspire; one year passed away without hearing any news from her lover, another came, but still the same silence; at length an account arrived that Arantes was no more, so that Aspasia now lost her love in desperation.

Time that obliterates every passion, by degrees assuaged the pain, which was felt by Aspasia, she was at last brought to listen to new addresses, and so far prevailed upon by the admonitions of her parents, that she consented to go into France with an old merchant who designed her for his son, then in Africa, trading  
with

with the natives of that barbarous region. Her voyage was successful, and if her refined manners charmed the old man, the son who soon after returned was not less enchanted.

A day was fixed for their nuptials ; and as he was the most opulent man in the country, all the inhabitants came successively to offer their congratulations, and in order to add still greater splendour to the solemnity, the young merchant who was to be bridegroom, made her a present of fifty slaves, who were at that time just landed, and within half a day's journey to attend her.

As the presence of such a number of slaves, it was thought would add to the magnificence of the entertainment, they were led up to the merchant's palace, loaded with merchandizes as was then the custom, and bending beneath their sorrows and fatigue. Aspasia felt all that humanity can inspire upon the sight of such distress, while they passed on successively before her. But what could equal her emotions when among the hindmost of those unhappy wretches, she beheld her own Arantes emaciated with labour and affliction, and with his eyes unalterably fixed upon the ground. She gave a loud convulsive shriek and fell senseless into the arms of her attendants. As her situation naturally drew the eyes of all upon her, Arantes saw once again the dear object of his earliest passion, and flew with haste to her assistance. Their story and his misfortune were soon made known to the company, and the young merchant, with peculiar generosity, resigned his mistress to the more early claim of Arantes.

Were this story a novel, it would end with the greatest propriety in this place ; but truth

disagreeably lengthens the account, for one day, sitting in a window of one of the apartments, happy in each other, and flushed with expectations of still greater rapture, a youth who with a bow had been shooting at birds in a neighbouring grove, drew it at random, and the arrow pierced both lovers at the same time. Thus a life of misfortune was terminated by as unfortunate an end. They were both laid in the same grave, and their epitaph still continues legible, though erected near a thousand years, a monument at once both of the caprice of their fate, and of their mutual fidelity.

I shall not make any addition to this story, Mr. Babler, by unnecessary observations.—If the story itself is not worth the attention of your readers, it can receive no benefit from any remarks of mine; so that I shall trespass no longer on your patience than to assure you, with how much regard,

I am your constant reader,

And very humble servant,

NARRATOR.

NUMB.



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NUMB. CXV. *Saturday, April 9.*

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THE character of an author is what such numbers are ambitious of obtaining, that every day produces some addition to the republic of letters, and shews us a great many honest gentlemen who imagine, that the publication of a book, let it be never so useless or despicable, must raise them in the estimation of the world, as if the surest method to establish an idea of the understandings, was to prove themselves triflers or fools. For my own part, great a partiality as I may feel for the productions of the press, I set but a very small value on those works which are not likely to be of service to society. The most ingenious treatise on the wing of a butterfly, has but very little merit in my opinion; and my ridicule is much more easily moved where a man of real talents takes an infinite deal of pains to prove some hypothesis, which, when it is proved, does not signify a sixpence to the world, than where I see a writer setting out to gain some point which will be really advantageous to mankind, but failing through an obvious want of abilities, in the attainment of his end.

There is, however, no part of literature in which men of genius are so apt to trifle, or in which blockheads are so apt to be insufferable, as in poetry. Who, for instance, that reads Mr. Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, can forbear lamenting to find so much sterling fancy and exquisite versification thrown away upon a subject which

cannot possibly be of the smallest benefit to the reader. Perhaps of all the pieces which this great man ever published the *Rape of the Lock* is the most finished and poetical; yet must it not grieve a considerate mind to recollect, that the *Rape of the Lock* is at best but a glittering toy; an elevated gewgaw, merely capable of amusing the fancy, but no way calculated to enlarge the understanding. Must it not grieve a considerate mind to see those astonishing abilities prodigally squandered on such despicable objects, when the choice of subjects suited to their natural dignity would have afforded the world a still greater degree of entertainment, and given it besides the most ample and salutary sources of instruction.

It is a very absurd opinion which a great many people adopt in regard to the end of poetry. So it amuses the fancy, they imagine it may neglect the heart; and so it tickles the ear in an agreeable manner, they never once trouble themselves about the effect which it is likely to have upon the understanding: thus they conclude, that the most exalted walk of all literature is to be the least useful to the world, and set down men of inferior talents only as the proper instructors of society. Absurd as this opinion is, it has nevertheless a prodigious number of advocates; and the generality of our modern poets seem to be so perfectly satisfied of its justice, that one half of our compositions are nothing more than elegies on linnets or black-birds—Descriptions of a river or a meadow—verses to the spring—and ballads about milliners girls and mantua-makers apprentices.

Did these worthy gentlemen, however, consider, that poetry is to the full as capable of improving

proving the mind, as of amusing the imagination, perhaps they would endeavour to give us some gleams of common sense in their productions.—Did they consider, that the principal number of our celebrated poets, while they entertained us with the finest ebullitions of genius, have given us also the soundest lessons of morality; and did they consider, that the harmony of numbers is almost entirely calculated to enforce the sentiments of virtue more strongly on our bosoms, they might be kindly led to mix a little reason now and then with their rhyme, and induced to believe, that the most polished versification is but a poor apology for dulness and insipidity.

The herd of modern versifiers unfortunately copy nothing but the defects of our celebrated writers. Instead of endeavouring to imitate the exalted flights of a Pope, they only follow him where he evidently descends; and because he, or because other great men like Scipio and Lælius, have employed themselves in skimming some little poetical pebbles on the surface of genius, they claim an everlasting privilege to trifle also, and run continually into their faults without once spiritedly attempting to reach the least of their perfections.

It is in reality surprising, when the main end of literature is to make mankind wiser and better, that the press is unceasingly teeming with productions which often want even the negative merit, of having no harm to countenance the grossness of their stupidity. Whoever is desirous of being an author should always carefully attend to this material circumstance, the instruction of his reader; he should judiciously consider



with himself, whether the publication, which he is about to make, is such as can either be serviceable to the judgment or to the heart; advantageous to the cause of good sense; or beneficial to the interests of morality: unless it answers one of these ends, he never can promise himself either profit or reputation, and it will be much more for his credit to continue in his usual state of obscurity, than to call for the attention of the world to shew himself a weak or a worthless member of the community.

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NUMB. CXVI. *Saturday, April 16.*

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**I**T sometimes happens that men, who make the most dangerous deviations from the laws of society, and the principles of virtue, in a great measure, owe their crimes to the very benevolence of their hearts; and that in the midst of all their guilt we find a dignity of soul which commands our highest admiration.

Frank Leeson, was the son of a country gentleman in Ireland, who possessed a little estate of about three hundred pounds a year, but who, with that liberality of sentiment, so particularly the characteristic of his nation, gave in to an hospitality rather beyond the power of his circumstances, and in promoting the happiness of his friends, too frequently forgot a necessary attention to his own; the consequence may be easily foreseen by the intelligent reader; old Mr. Leeson was involved in perpetual difficulties, and was upon the eve of being thrown into prison, when  
he

he was saved from a disgrace of that nature by the extraordinary piety of his son; Frank to a very excellent understanding, joined a very amiable person; on which account, a young lady with an independent fortune of eight thousand pounds had long beheld him with a favourable eye; but Frank being attached to another whose beauty and merit were her only recommendations, had hitherto declined to profit by this lady's partiality; however, when he saw there was no other method of saving an infirm father and mother from poverty and bondage, the force of his filial affection got the better of his love; he tore himself from the woman of his soul, and married the eight thousand pounds: with this money he paid off all the old gentleman's debts, and entered the world with a degree of reputation, considerably superior to the generality of his acquaintance.

As nothing could separate Frank and his father, the old couple and the young lived for some time in the most perfect state of harmony under the same roof; and the severity of their former situation producing a necessary regulation in their expences, they were every day rising no less in opulence than in felicity, when an unexpected misfortune left them in the moment of their utmost security without shelter and without bread: old Mr. Leeson, finding his health very much impaired, and conceiving a disgust moreover at the part in which he resided, because his friends had not formerly been so ready to assist him in his necessities, as he had reason to expect; resolved with the concurrence of his son to dispose of his estate, and to make an adequate purchase in the neighbourhood of Dublin, where he might

have an opportunity of consulting the best physicians, and establishing a more agreeable circle of acquaintance: pursuant to this plan, he sold every acre he possessed, had the purchase money home in bills, and was preparing to set off for another part of the kingdom in a day or two, when an accidental fire reduced his habitation to an heap of ashes, destroyed all his effects, and gave him scarcely a moment more than was absolutely necessary for the preservation of his family: Frank, whose whole property was also in bills, and packed up ready for the intended departure, lost all in the general calamity, and was obliged, together with his father, his mother and his wife, to take refuge at a neighbouring gentleman's for a few days, till they were in a capacity of reaching the metropolis, where Frank expected from some letters which he obtained to the Lord Lieutenant, to procure a little establishment either in the army or the public offices.

On the arrival of our unfortunate family in town, young Mr. Leeson applied himself industriously to profit by his recommendations; but alas, though he met with civility, he could obtain no relief; every fresh application gave him nothing but fresh occasion to lament the miserable prospect before him; and while he was continually cheering every bosom at home with the speedy expectation of halcyon days, he had nothing but despair in his own. At length, destruction became too evident to be concealed; his father, who was now confined to his bed, had been a whole day without sustenance, and young Mrs. Leeson was every hour trembling, lest the pains of parturiency should oblige her to solicit



solicit the charitable assistance of the public; thus situated, torn with a thousand pangs, for a wife who possessed his highest esteem; for a father whom he almost worshipped, and a mother whom he tenderly loved; Frank sallied out one evening into the streets, and stopping a gentleman, whose appearance indicated opulence, he demanded his money with such a wildness of accent, that the gentleman terrified out of his wits, immediately gave him a purse of fifty guineas, and Frank eagerly retreated to his lodgings, depositing the money with his father, and telling him he had received it from the Lord Lieutenant's order, as an earnest only of future obligations; the family at home not doubting the truth of this relation, poured out their whole souls in acknowledgment of the viceroy's goodness, and once more refreshed themselves with a comfortable repast.

Next morning, however, the robbery became noised abroad, and to the great surprize of every body a merchant of the first character and fortune was apprehended for the fact and lodged in Newgate; on the earliest knowledge of this circumstance, Frank immediately wrote to the innocent gentleman, desiring him to be under no apprehension, for if he was not honourably acquitted, the person actually guilty would on the day of trial appear in court, acknowledge his crime, and surrender himself to the violated laws of his country; the gentleman naturally read his letter to every body, but though such as were his friends, talked of it as a most extraordinary affair, the generality of people considered it as a despicable artifice calculated to impose on the credulity of the public; however, the day

of trial at last came; and notwithstanding the merchant's character appeared irreproachable before this unfortunate stain; notwithstanding several personages of the highest figure, proved him a man remarkably nice in his principles and opulent in his circumstances; the prosecutor was so positive in his charge, and a number of circumstances so surprisngly concurred, that he was actually convicted; and the judge proceeding to sentence, when a loud noise of *make way* ran through the court, and young Mr. Leeson, with a manly, yet, modest countenance, rushing forward, demanded to be heard, and delivered himself to the following effect:

“ You see before you, my Lord, an unhappy  
“ young man, who once little thought of violat-  
“ ing the laws of his country, and who wished  
“ rather to be the friend, than the enemy of So-  
“ ciety; but who knows to what he may be  
“ urged in the hour of a piercing calamity; to  
“ what he may be wrought when destitute of  
“ friends and destitute of bread? I, my lord, was  
“ born a gentleman and bred one; six months  
“ ago I was master of an easy fortune, but an  
“ accidental fire in a moment reduced me to  
“ beggary, and what still more distressed me,  
“ reduced also an infirm and excellent father, an  
“ aged and tender mother, together with the  
“ best of women and the best of wives to the  
“ same lamentable situation; encouraged by  
“ some recommendations to the great, we came  
“ up to town, and expected a decent means of  
“ procuring a subsistence; but alas, my Lord,  
“ those who want compassion most, are those  
“ who are most commonly disregarded; instead  
“ of assistance we received compliments, and  
“ met

“ met with the bow of a frigid politeness, where  
 “ we looked for the bounteous hand of relief;  
 “ so that in a little time, our all was totally ex-  
 “ hausted; and my unhappy father with the ve-  
 “ nerable partner of his youth were above a day  
 “ without any sustenance whatsoever, when  
 “ unable to see them expiring for food, I rushed  
 “ forth; and committed the robbery, for which  
 “ this gentleman now prisoner at the bar has  
 “ been condemned.”

“ This was not the whole of my affliction;  
 “ a fond deserving wife, who had brought me a  
 “ plentiful fortune, lay also perishing with hun-  
 “ ger, and that too in a situation which de-  
 “ manded the tenderest attention, and the most  
 “ immediate regard: such, my Lord, were my  
 “ motives for that unjustifiable action. Had the  
 “ gentleman condemned, been happily acquitted,  
 “ I had not made this public acknowledgment of  
 “ my guilt: heaven only knows what I have  
 “ suffered during his confinement; but the em-  
 “ pire of the universe would not bribe me to in-  
 “ jure him farther; nor tempt me by an in-  
 “ famous sacrifice of his life, to consult the safety  
 “ of my own. Here then, my Lord, I claim  
 “ his sentence, and demand his bonds. Provi-  
 “ dence will, I doubt not, now take care of my  
 “ innocent family, who are equally ignorant of  
 “ my crime, and my self-accusation. For my  
 “ own part, I am resigned; and I feel nothing  
 “ in consequence of my approaching fate, but  
 “ from what I am sensible my miserable friends  
 “ must suffer on my account.”

Here Mr. Leeson ended, and the whole court  
 was lost in approbation and tears.—He was, how-  
 ever condemned, but pardoned the same day;  
 and



and his character suffered so little upon this occasion, that the Lord Lieutenant gave him, with his life, a place of seven hundred pounds a year, while the merchant, who had been accused from resembling him excessively, dying sometime after without issue, left him his whole fortune, as a reward for so exemplary an act of justice and generosity.

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NUMB. CXVII. *Saturday, April 23.*

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**A**S the managers of our theatres are, I am satisfied, gentlemen of too much understanding to be offended with any body for pointing out such casual improprieties as in the great multiplicity of their business, may possibly escape their own observations; I shall employ the present paper in acquainting them with a circumstance or two, which may be altered much to the satisfaction of the public, without exposing themselves to the smallest inconvenience, or the minutest expence.

As I am very fond of a play and generally take my station in the Pit, I am frequently offended at the constant interruptions which the performance meets with from the restless dispositions of the music, who the moment an act is begun, always get up, stare about perhaps with an idle gape of stupidity, and then withdraw, tho' conscious that their presence is indispensibly requisite in half an hour at the farthest—when the prompter touches his bell towards the close of the act, the audience is again disturbed by their entrance,

entrance, and this entrance is made with so little caution, that the actors are absolutely impeded in the prosecution of their parts, and the attention of the spectators very frequently called from the most interesting passages of the play. Sometimes these considerate gentlemen will even tune their various instruments while the performer is actually speaking, and I have more than once heard Lear exclaiming against the unnatural hags his daughters, to the disjointed squeak of a hautboy, the impertinent sharp of a fiddle, or the drowsy hum of a bassoon. In every play we are sure of being disturbed ten times, by the very people who are paid to encrease our entertainment; and who surely should from motives of interest, if not from principles of gratitude, seize every opportunity of adding to our satisfaction.

What kind of corporeal qualities may go to the composition of a fiddler I neither know, nor am I very solicitous of being informed. I cannot however help thinking, but what they might sit as quietly in their seats, as their paymasters the public. During the course of an evening's entertainment not one in a hundred of the auditors find it necessary to go out. Why therefore the whole band of music, should have occasion to interrupt us regularly every half hour is somewhat extraordinary. A little common sense cannot surely prejudice the nicety of their ears, or the expertness of their fingers; and if not, what excuse can they possibly assign for a behaviour so generally disagreeable to the town, and so palpably below the practice of any men who pretended in the least either to manners or to modesty?

It is a circumstance mentioned highly to the honour of the late prince of Wales, his Majesty's father, that having by some unavoidable accident outstaid his time one evening when he had commanded a play, he was no sooner informed that the audience had been obliged to wait in consequence of his delay, than he pulled out his watch in the full face of the house, as if he had recognized his error, and bowed with such an acknowledgment of gracious condescension, as rendered him inconceivably amiable from his little mistake. With all possible deference to the gentlemen of the catgut, and the professors of the pipe, I think the Prince of Wales a personage of as much consequence as the best of them; and therefore if an apology was amiable in him for detaining an audience some minutes from a favourite entertainment, it must be thought a little presumptuous in them to be perpetually disturbing it. It is not however the members of the band to whom I address myself; it is to their *immediate* masters, and I flatter myself after what I have here said, I shall have but little occasion to expatiate on the subject for the future, as the managers have good-sense, and the public have recollection.

The next abuse which I think wants reformation in our theatres, is the practice which some of the capital performers have of raising the price of the Pit at their benefits. This of all the acts of presumption, which I ever remember in the professors of the stage is by much the most glaring and unpardonable; and if it should be tolerated but a few seasons longer, there is no knowing to what lengths the temerity may be carried. I am far from being an enemy to the drama;



drama; on the contrary, I wish particularly well to the actors; and am never better pleased than when I see their merits properly rewarded, by the munificence of the public. But I think there is none of our performers who ought not to be very thankful for a clear benefit of two hundred pounds. This, either of the theatres will afford them at the common prices; and one should surely imagine that they ought to testify their acknowledgments for the annual company of their friends, rather than make use of that very esteem which the town entertains for them, to load it with an additional charge—what they may think of the affair I know not; but of this I am fully persuaded, that the man who would not think himself highly obliged by a clear benefit of two hundred pounds, never deserves to have a benefit at all.

Let us however examine a little into the general excuse which the gentlemen of the theatres think proper to urge in extenuation of this extraordinary behaviour; whenever they are reprehended on this account their constant plea is, that they raise their price in order to oblige their friends, and that as nobody is forced to come, nobody can complain of an injury. This excuse scarcely merits a reply; yet let me ask the people who urge it, whether the theatre is not entirely a public entertainment; and whether they can properly dispose of those places to any particular individuals, which are equally appointed for the indifferent reception of all—Custom has for a long time authorized the letting of places in the boxes; but custom has never authorized an addition to the regular price—Why therefore the frequenters of the Pit should be excluded

excluded from their usual seats without the payment of two shillings extraordinary is a circumstance which surprises me much. What have the Pit part of the audience done that they should be singled out to bear the imposition of some arrogant favourite, whom they themselves have probably raised into reputation? If an addition must be made to the price of tickets on benefit nights, let the tax become general; let the Boxes and the galleries come in for their portion of the burden, and let not the people of the Pit be the only persons destined to bear the scourge of theatrical avarice and temerity—If an actor's friends want to put a sum of money in his pocket, let them give double or treble the value for their own tickets; but let not the indifferent part of the public be obliged to pay for friendships in which they have no manner of connexion. The buildings which formerly disgraced the stage on benefit-nights have been judiciously removed by the good-sense of the managers; it is therefore to be hoped that they will shew as much readiness in the suppression of a palpable injustice as in the suppression of a mere inconvenience; and that they will not suffer their performers to take a liberty with the public, which they dare not take themselves.

The last thing which I shall recommend to the managers, is to consult the propriety of places, and to pay a little attention to the rank of their characters.—What business has a party of the English foot guards to attend upon a Persian emperor? Or is it a reason that a prince should not be habited like a prince, because the actor who appears in the character has but thirty shillings a week:—It is inconceivable how these  
little

little things affect an accurate observer—who can bear to see the duke of Cornwall's gentleman dressed better than the duke of Cornwall himself—or endure with patience to see the persons of one single family dressed in the manner of half a dozen different countries? The probability of the fiction becomes destroyed by means of these slovenly inattentions, and Drury-lane or Covent-garden, stare us continually in the face, when we want to be in Spain or in France, in Italy or Illyria.

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NUMB. CXVIII. *Saturday, April 30.*

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*To the* BABLER.

S I R,

**T**HERE is a set of good-natured people in the world, who so far from rejoicing at the prosperity of their neighbours, are continually mortified whenever they see others growing up happily into life, and encreasing in their circumstances either by the force of their own industry, or some unexpected turn of good fortune.

You must know, Mr. Babler, that I was lately a shop-keeper in the Strand, and though I say it myself, was as pains-taking a young fellow as most are; being assiduous in my duty, I was successful in my trade, and would in all probability have soon acquired a comfortable independence, had not the will of a generous relation rendered it unnecessary for me to labour any longer,



longer, by bequeathing me a fortune of full twelve hundred a year. On this acquisition I made over my shop to a worthy young fellow of my own family, and began to shew away a little smartly, naturally supposing that as I was now a man of fortune, there could be no impropriety whatsoever in assuming the appearance of a gentleman; more especially too, as my education had been tolerably genteel, and my friends were of no little consideration in the country. Yet unhappily, Sir, though I shook my old acquaintance with as much cordiality by the hand as ever, and was as ready as ever to pass an evening with them at the Crown and Anchor, nevertheless the presumption of setting up a carriage, and the vanity of wearing a bit of lace upon my coat, were inexhaustible sources of ridicule. It was expected that I should be still the very self same haberdasher I originally set out in life; and instead of acting in the character I was now entitled to put on, it was thought inconceivably arrogant that I deviated in the least from the simplicity of my mechanical appearance. Hence a thousand sarcasms of underbred smartness were continually spouted at me; and so far from gaining any little credit from the preservation of my former affability, that very affability was ascribed to some motives of affectation, and only served to plunge me in additional contempt.

Wearied out with the malevolent reflexions of the town, I determined at last to retire into Nottinghamshire, where my property principally lay, in hopes that a new set of acquaintance would treat me in a very different manner; and that so long as I behaved like a gentleman, I should at least be entitled to good manners and civility.

civility. But alas, Sir, here I found, if possible, fresh causes of uneasiness and mortification. My profession had been noised through the whole neighbourhood; and the gentlemen of fortune found it utterly below the consequence of their characters to associate with a despicable fellow who had formerly been a tradesman; when I went down therefore, they unanimously resolved to avoid the most distant intercourse with me. Instead of visiting me as a stranger, they even returned my cards of invitation; and one worthy wight in particular, the grandson of a cheesemonger, threatened to horse-whip my servant, if he ever more presumed to come again, on such a message from a pitiful little shop-keeper. What to do, Mr. Babler, I knew not: possessed of a good estate I could not herd with the very plebeians of the country; and those with whom I thought myself entitled to rank, disdained to keep me company. Thus circumstanced I was obliged to return to the metropolis which had used me with so unremitting a degree of ill-nature, and forced to trust to the casual acquaintance of the play or the coffee-house, rather than detach myself entirely from society.

The old adage, Mr. Babler, is a very good one, which says, "Consider what I *am*, not what I *have* been." If mankind were in general to be estimated by their original situations in life, we should find but very few of our most dignified characters entitled to respect; the bishop that pronounces the benediction in our churches would be found some inconsiderable little chaplain. The chancellor, who like another Deity, directs in all matters of equity, would come out perhaps an obscure chamber council; and the minister

minister who made both bishop and chancellor, appear no more at first setting out than a paltry cornet of horse ; yet surely upon their advancement in the world, it would be quite wrong were they to crawl in the contracted circumference of their primeval circles. It would be ridiculous for the first to spend his evenings continually at the Chapter coffee-house ; idle in the second to pass away his leisure at the Grecian ; and as improper for the third to be perpetually lounging at George's. If therefore those who appear in the most elevated characters are to act consistently with what they *are*, and not in conformity to what they *have* been, it cannot surely be improper for those who move in a more subordinate sphere to follow the same example. A man, while he continues in trade, should appear like a tradesman ; but if by any accident he should arrive at the possession of a plentiful estate, is it not as requisite that he should appear like a man of fortune ? Upon all occasions is it not necessary to act with a characteristic degree of propriety ? Propriety, in fact, is constituted by the observance of character ; and consequently he that acts agreeable to the rules of propriety, is infinitely less intitled to the general ridicule, than he who is terrified by the thing which he formerly has been from assuming the consequence really belonging to what he is. If you approve these sentiments, Mr. Babler, you will kindly give them a place ; if not, they shall be sent for in a few days,

By, Sir, your constant reader,

ANIMADVERTOR.



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NUMB. CXIX. *Saturday, May 7.*

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To the BABLER.

S I R,

**A**MONG all the extraordinary characters in the extensive rounds of infamy, who are entitled to the detestation of the public, I know of none more odious than those who depend upon the bounty of some prostitute for a maintenance, and live upon the wages which some miserable woman earns by the most abandoned sacrifice both of her peace and her reputation. Yet that there are men so callous to every dictate of delicacy, so dead to every sentiment of shame, as to boast of such a support; and even make an absolute profession of living by the profligacy of the other sex, experience every day must fatally convince the sensible observer: let those, however, who doubt the truth of the remark, cast an eye over the following little portrait, and every ninety-nine readers in a hundred will immediately point out the person from whom I have taken the resemblance.

CODRAX was born of very obscure parents in Shropshire, and had little obligations either to nature or education, but the advantages of a tolerable person and an impudence unparalleled: Being sent into the world at a very early age with little other dependance than these two qualifications, he strove upon all occasions to make them

them answer some account. Hence, wherever he went, he was a man of professed gallantry; yet having no passions to gratify besides the despicable avarice of his temper, his attacks were constantly directed against those who were likely to supply him with money, the moment he obtained any place in their affections. Ignorant as he was of every thing else, he knew that a woman who parts with her heart would be easily led to a sacrifice of her interest, and therefore made use of the same passport to the purse which gave him first of all an admittance to the person.

Among the number of those who distinguished him by particular marks of liberality, the mistress of a certain noble Lord, who was herself allowed an ample income by the munificence of her lover, made him an appointment out of her salary of four hundred pounds a year; furnished an elegant house for his convenience, and even set up an equipage to gratify his vanity. It is the constant curse of keepers to be disregarded by those wretches on whom they are most lavish of their bounty; and it is as constantly the curse of the miserable wretches themselves, to squander away what is thus obtained from the object of their aversion, on rascals who treat them with cruelty or contempt. This was the case of the unfortunate woman before us. Every sixpence which her artifice stole from the misguided partiality of her Lord, she immediately gave into the possession of Codrax, and thought herself amply rewarded if he even condescended to receive these instances of her regard with any tolerable share of civility. Her fondness, however, was too palpable to be always concealed;  
her

her Lord found out her attachment, and discarded her with the obloquy she merited. She, however, had still some jewels, and other valuable moveables. These she parted with gradually to support the prodigality of her infamous paramour, and at last reduced herself to a single change of clothes.—Finding there was no prospect of benefiting any farther by her weakness. Codrax decamped without beat of drum, and left her to all the stings of pinching poverty and a despairing love. In this situation the keenness of her sufferings found a refuge in distraction; and a cell in Bedlam is now the retreat of an unhappy wretch, who some time ago could waste no less than thousands in the pursuit of her licentious dissipations. In the midst of all her distresses Codrax, though opulent through the means of her very affection for him, refused to give her a shilling; he saw her for some time wandering naked through the streets, bereft alike of habitation and bread, yet still he denied the smallest relief. But who could expect a dawn of humanity in a bosom which was totally lost to honour; or think that a mind could be tinctured with the minutest touches of benevolence, which could become scandalously dependant even upon infamy for a support, and stoop to be a prostitute to actual prostitution.

One of the next strokes in the character of Codrax, is the destruction of a whole family in the country. Having, in consequence of his last connection, now got a handsome sum in his pocket, he went down to a certain country town in an elegant chariot, attended by a couple of servants, and took lodgings just by the house of a widow lady, who had been left by the ridiculous



lous partiality of a doating husband, the sole care of two children, one a daughter quite marriageable; and what was still worse, the sole possession of their father's estate, which amounted to five hundred pounds a year. Our hero's appearance was smart, and his person, as I have before observed, agreeable; he therefore easily got himself introduced to the old matron's house, and made such good use of his time, that in less than a fortnight, both mother and daughter were entirely at his devotion: he continued this hopeful connection with the two, till he had either squandered away or engrossed the principal part of their fortune into his hands: He then took his leave triumphantly of the family; the female part of which did not long survive his departure. The mother died of a broken heart, in all the miseries, as I hear, of a parish workhouse; and the daughter perished in childbed for want of common necessaries. What became of the son I know not, but I think somebody told me that he is now either a common seaman in our fleets, or a common soldier in our armies.

Codrax is now leagued with a profligate performer in the service of the public, who has a considerable sum of money and some valuable jewels in her possession. He has for some time assumed the title of knighthood; and ordered in a variety of articles from various tradesmen, who have not yet perhaps repented of their credulity. How long this connection may continue, is a matter of little consequence to the world. Those, however, who see this, may be warned by the advice of a friend, and take care how they admit such a man into their families. Should my letter be productive of so salutary an effect, my wish

with will be answered; and I shall with pleasure acknowledge myself your very humble servant,

JUSTICE.

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NUMB. CXX. *Saturday, May 14.*

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IN one of my papers, some time ago, I threw out a hint relative to a passion, which my young rogue Harry had conceived for Miss Cornelia Marchmont, whom I mentioned as the very abstract of every mental perfection, and every personal accomplishment; my conjecture for a considerable while was acquiring fresh foundation, but as my nephew said nothing of the matter to me, I took no notice of it to him, though I could not help smiling at the belief, which he entertained, that I was totally ignorant in regard to the object of his affections—Last monday sevennight however, he came to me with an air of the greatest transport, and after apologizing for not having made me acquainted with the business a little sooner, informed me, that Miss Marchmont had blest him that morning with the acknowledgment of a reciprocal esteem, and that I was the person whom she had pitched upon to open a negotiation between the two families.

As I do not know any young lady existing, who possesses a greater share of my esteem, than Miss Marchmont; nor ever saw a person so immediately calculated to make my boy happy, I shook him cordially by the hand, wished him joy from the bottom of my heart, and instantly

set out to my sister Rattle, who is a very worthy woman, though she sometimes will argue with me about a point of philosophy; and is a very sensible one too, though she has within these three months found fault with one or two of my Bablers:—Luckily on my entrance, I found Mr. Marchmont, Cornelia's father, chatting with her at the parlour fire, and as he and I have been intimately acquainted above thirty years, I opened the business of my errand without any ceremony, and this the more especially, because I knew neither could have any reasonable objection to the match; every thing turned out as I expected, both were rejoiced at the affection between the young people; and there being no mighty matters of law to retard the celebration of the nuptials, I thought it best to make short work of the affair, and accordingly fixed the wedding for the following Saturday. The proposition being approved by the parent of each, I retired to make Harry happy with the intelligence, and in pursuance of the agreement I saw him blest with one of the worthiest, as well as sweetest girls in the universe, with ten thousand pounds in her pocket last Saturday morning;—Harry has fifteen hundred a year himself, and my sister who has a very good jointure, is I fancy making a purse for him into the bargain;—so that between what he must have upon her decease, and upon the decease of another person, who shall be nameless, there will be ample provision for a rising family.

As I look upon a wedding-day, to be one of the most important calls which either of the sexes have in their whole lives, for the exertion of an extraordinary delicacy I was not a little attentive



tive to the behaviour of my two favourites, and it gave me infinite pleasure to observe upon the whole, that Harry's behaviour was manly, tender and respectful, without deviating into that fulsome disagreeable fondness; of which, even men of the best sense are often guilty, when they have just obtained the woman of their heart: As to Cornelia, I never saw a young creature in her situation, conduct herself with more propriety—to all the dignity of conscious virtue, she joined all the ineffable sweetness of an engaging timidity; and though she seemed proud of the man whom she had thus preferred to all the world, yet she had too much sensibility not to feel some amiable terrors, at so awful an alteration of her circumstances.

After the performance of the ceremony we all retired to Mr. Marchmont's, and there being a large company of us, Harry judiciously proposed an unremitting round of amusements both before dinner and after, which entirely employed the attention even of the most volatile, and prevented the circulation of those indelicate ambiguities with which the generality of wedding-days are frequently disgraced. So that our mirth was as it ought to be; mingled with good sense and manners; and of course the harmony of a day could be little liable to interruption while that harmony was regulated by reason and civility.

I have been often shocked at the solemnization of a marriage, to see the ridiculous, I had almost said the profligate, levity with which people have approached the altar of the divine being, and jested with one another at the instant of supplicating a blessing from his hand: Nay, I have been many times present where the clergyman who

read the service has considered the affair as a matter of the greatest merriment, and even winked with a peculiar degree of archness at the bride, when he came to mention the procreation of children.

One would imagine on a wedding day, that, if the friends of the married couple had even no veneration for the deity, they would at least have some little share of politeness; and be actuated by a tender concern for the feelings of the lady, if they even felt no awe whatsoever in the presence of their God. A woman of any sensibility on her wedding-day, must naturally be in circumstances sufficiently embarrassed, without hearing any illiberal pleasantries from the company, to enhance the difficulties of her situation. When she considers that the happiness or misery of her life materially depends upon the choice which she has then made, she has cause enough for terror: and when she considers the privilege which is shortly to be claimed by the object of that choice, when she considers that the delicate reserve, in which she has all her life been brought up, is in an instant to be sacrificed to his inclination; I say, when all these things are considered, nothing can be more insolent, or indeed more cruel, than to aggravate her distress, by the practice of any improper jocularities. People I am sensible are strangely attached to old customs, but every custom should be abolished, which is in the least repugnant to reason and civility; on which account, I flatter myself the reader will give a proper attention to this subject, and correct the error I have been here speaking of as far as he is able, in the circuit of his acquaintance.

NUMB.

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NUMB. CXXI. *Saturday, May 21.*

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**D**URING the time of the celebrated Thomas Kouli Kahn, it was a common amusement with him and his officers, to take a number of asses, and try who could make the deepest incision, in the backs of those unfortunate animals with a sabre; he that cut farthest was allowed the reputation of the strongest man; and frequently it happened that one of the miserable creatures was entirely divided asunder by the force of a single stroke: this anecdote was mentioned at a club to which I have the honour of belonging, by a gentleman of unquestionable veracity and good sense, who was many years a resident in Persia, and was an occasional spectator at several of these inhuman diversions; the whole company to their honour, it must be mentioned, expressed an honest abhorrence at such barbarous relaxations, and we all congratulated ourselves upon living in a country, where it would be scandalous, for the very first orders to imitate the Persian hero in his brutal exercises.

When I got home, however, I could not help reflecting, that notwithstanding the conscious pride of heart, which we all possessed in the moment of self-congratulation, a number of amusements could be pointed out in this kingdom considerably more barbarous, than the practice of hewing an ass to pieces, though this appeared so justly shocking to our imaginations: nay, what is still worse, the enjoyment of several barbarities is particularly



reserved for people of the first figure and understanding, as if those, whose feeling should be uncommonly tender, had an additional title to the commission of cruelties; and as if a violent outrage upon every sentiment of humanity, should be the peculiar privilege of birth and fortune:—My readers may be surprised at this observation, upon the people of England; yet let me ask if it be more cruel to torture an ass, than to torture a stag; or whether it is not even more compassionate to dispatch the first at a blow, than to pursue the latter for a number of hours, encreasing the wretched animal's agony at every step, and yielding it up at last, to a death that must harrow up the bosom of any good natured man, who allows himself a moment's space for reflexion.

The more in reality that we consider this point, the more we shall find it necessary, to condemn the inhabitants of this civilized, this benevolent country; the Persian when he dispatches the unfortunate ass, commits no trespass upon the property of his neighbour, nor manifests any disregard to the distresses of a friend: the animal whom he destroys is his own, it is confined to a particular spot: and nobody can suffer in its death but himself; whereas in the prosecution of the chase with us, we trample inconsiderately through half a county, perhaps, over the corn grounds and inclosures, which the industrious farmer has cultivated, or planted, at a very great expence; and if the person whom we thus injure expresses any resentment at our conduct, we possibly horsewhip him for his insolence, and send him home with the reparation of a bleeding head, to comfort his wife and children.

dren. This is not all, in the phrenzy of a hunting match, as well as being sensible to the wrongs which we offer to others, we become wholly unmindful of the prejudice, which we do ourselves; for let our lives be of never such consequence to our families, we become regardless of danger; we never hesitate at leaps that are manifestly big with destruction; and even, if the brother of our breast should meet with any accident in this mad-headed course, so far from stopping to assist him, we make an absolute jest of his misfortune, and express a sense of pleasure in proportion as we find him involved in distress; if he dislocates a leg or an arm by a fall from his horse, he affords us an exquisite entertainment; but, if he actually fractures his skull, our mirth becomes extravagant, and we continue wild with delight, till happiness is totally effaced by intoxication.

The civilized nations of Europe are extremely ready, upon all occasions to stigmatize every other part of the world with the epithet of barbarians, though the appellation might with infinitely more propriety be conferred upon themselves; among the politest of our neighbours, there are a thousand customs kept up, which would fill the most uncultivated savage with horror, and give him, if possible, a still more contemptible idea of christianity; an Indian Brachmin, for instance, will frequently go to the sea-side, while the fishermen are drawing their nets, and purchase a whole boat full of fish for the humane satisfaction of restoring the expiring creatures to their natural element, and snatching them from death;—nay, the tenderness of the Brachmins is so excessive, with regard to the animal creation, that they have been known to

purchase cattle at an extraordinary price, merely to save them from slaughter; compassionately thinking, the lowing heifer, or the bleating lamb, an equal, though an humbler heir of existence, with themselves: what then, would men of this exalted benevolence, think of the British nation, were they to see with what solemnity the right of murdering an innocent Partridge, or a harmless Hare, is settled by the legislative power of the kingdom? Were they to see the armies, which at particular seasons, issue forth, to destroy the warbling inhabitants of air, for actual diversion; the sportive tenants of the river, for idle recreation? But above all, what would they feel to see a generous domestic little bird, scandalously tied to the stake, and denied the smallest chance of life, at the eve of a sacred fast, set apart by our holy religion, for the purposes of extraordinary sanctity, and the business of unusual mortification;—it is impossible to imagine what they would feel, when there are even Christians to be found, who cannot see the practice without horror, nor think of it without tears.

I am far from carrying my notions of tenderness to the animal creation, beyond the bounds of reason, as the Brachmins do, who think it irreligious to feed upon any thing which has been ever endued with life; because I believe, the great author of all things designed these animals principally for the use and sustenance of man: yet at the same time, that I suppose they were formed by the Deity for the relief of our necessities, I cannot imagine he ever intended they should be tortured through wantonness, or destroyed for diversion; nor can I imagine, but what even the superstitious forbearance of the  
Brachmins,



Brachmins, is infinitely more pleasing in his sight, than the inconsiderate cruelty of those who profess an immediate obedience to his word: a God All-mercy, never takes delight in the unnecessary agony of a creature, whom he has been pleased to endue with existence; we therefore offer an insult to him, when we give a needless pang to the meanest of his creatures, and absolutely pervert the design of his Providence, whenever we sacrifice those animals to our amusements, which he has constituted entirely for the relief of our wants.

I have thrown out these reflexions with a benevolent purpose, as such numbers of the ignorant and the thoughtless, are apt to promote their amusements at the expence of their humanity; should what I have here offered be attended with the reformation but of an individual, I shall think my time well employed; ridicule I must naturally expect from numbers, for daring to combat with favourite prejudices; but it is my consolation, that no witticism whatever, which may be aimed at me as a writer, can, on the present subject of animadversion, do me the minutest injury as a man.

NUMB.

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NUMB. CXXII. *Saturday, May 28.*

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**W**E are told by Plutarch, that whenever the celebrated Phocion stood up in the senate to speak upon the business of the nation, Demosthenes, who generally espoused a different system of politics, would whisper the person who sat next him, and say, *here comes the pruning hook of my periods.* For my own part, greatly as I myself may fall under the common censure with the generality of my brother scribblers, I could nevertheless wish that the present age had some salutary pruning hook, to lop off the redundancies of expression in literary composition; that the reader might not be put to the trouble of going over an unnecessary number of words, which, instead of helping out a writer's sense, most commonly have quite a contrary effect, and only serve to obscure the tendency of his arguments.

In the Prosaic productions of the press, our modern writers, instead of aiming at conciseness and perspicuity, are too apt to study what is called a *rotundity* of period; and too ready to trespass upon propriety, for the mere consideration of embellishment; thus to make a sentence roll floridly on the ear, they often run into the most tedious repetitions; and use double the requisite quantity of words from an unaccountable supposition, that an elegance of style is constituted by an absolute prolixity: whereas a moment's recollection must satisfy a sensible mind, that the sooner we discover our meanings, the more masterly our pens must be naturally esteemed; and the sooner we inform the understanding of  
a reader,

a reader, the more capable we are to answer the important designs of his instruction.

In poetical composition there is nothing more frequent than the practice of clogging a line with a load of useless epithet or unmeaning pleonasm, merely to fill out the necessary quantity of syllables: to point out what I mean more strongly I shall give the reader an example from a man of no less consequence than Addison. The following ill-written simile in Cato has been greatly admired, and even in the Guardian it is quoted as one of the principal beauties which excites the admiration of lady Lizard and her family:

*So the pure limpid stream when foul'd with stains,  
Of gushing torrents and descending rains,  
Works itself clear, and as it runs refines,  
Till by degrees the floating mirror shines:  
Reflect each flow'r that on the border grows,  
And a new heaven in its fair bosom shews.*

In the four first lines of this simile the judicious reader will immediately perceive, that the poet has done little more than called a spade a spade; that is, made use of synonymous epithets or meanings entirely similar; the epithet *pure* is just the same as *limpid*; and we all know that when a stream is *fouled*, it must be *stained* of course: in like manner *to work itself clear*, it must *refine as it runs*; and consequently refining only as it runs, its shining must be gradual. To be serious, the poet might as well repeat the term *pure*, as follow it with the term *limpid*; and he might with just the same elegance tell us, that the stream was stained with stains, as use a word  
of



of just the same signification. Mr. Addison, however highly entitled to our admiration as a prose-writer, has, as a versifier, but small pretensions to our applause; it is not therefore so much to censure him that I have pointed out the present imperfection, as to warn my poetical purchasers from copying the mistake. In poetry our epithets should never be forced—properly used they have a fine effect; but when they are visibly dragged in to spin out the measure of a line, and are moreover bald repetitions of the same idea, they become abominable. Nothing contributes more to their beauty than variety; and nothing is easier than to render them various. A stream, for instance, has more qualities than one; it may be smooth as well as limpid; and a rose besides its colour, has fragrance to distinguish it. When, therefore, our objects have qualities enough to supply us with a diversity of epithets, it must be a strange forgetfulness indeed to pick out a synonym, and to tell the world that what is excellent is excellent.

The great art of all style is for a writer never to throw away his words; never to introduce any thing into his piece but what is really necessary for the main purpose of his design. It is not because he has a pompous period of prose to display, or has a mind to parade with a particular blaze of poetical fancy, that he should overleap the bounds of propriety; no composition can have merit but in proportion as it is founded upon good sense; and good sense must always feel an injury where a stab is directed at propriety. For these reasons an author should always aim at saying pertinent things, in preference

rence to fine ones; and when his partiality for some new sentiment is running away with his judgment, he ought to consider that the eye of the world is much more inclined to kindle with disdain, than to sparkle with admiration; he ought to consider that an indifferent reader may look with the greatest contempt upon the very passage which he himself views with so exquisite a degree of satisfaction; and he ought also to consider, that the noblest flight of genius, improperly brought in, is at best but a shining absurdity.

For these reasons therefore, when a writer sits down to work upon a subject which he imagines of consequence to mankind, let him by all means prefer the substantial advantages of intrinsic use, to the flimsy fripperies of outside ornament; let him endeavour to be clear before he strives to be florid; and let him, where he aims at a floridity of style, take care that he is not in danger of striking on the quicksands of a dull repetition, or a lifeless prolixity. Style is but a very insignificant circumstance, unless it has actual matter to embellish; and it must render a man truly ridiculous indeed, who takes a world of pains in the formation of a sentence, which cannot possibly answer the most inconsiderable end. Upon the whole, if we cannot attain a style in literary composition without tediousness or tautology; if we are forced to load every period with an unnecessary weight of words, merely to give our sentiments a little air of smoothness and order, I think it would in general be adviseable if we avoided an acquaintance with pen and ink; though at any rate a plain little frock will become us infinitely better than

than a tawdry fantastic coat covered entirely with tinsel, and marking us out to the world as a ridiculous compound of affectation and inability.

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NUMB. CXXIII. *Saturday, June 5.*

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**I**T is now above four years since the Babler first presumed to solicit the attention of the Public, and during that period he has been happily favoured with a reception, which while it does the highest honour to the generosity of his readers, impresses the most lively sense of gratitude upon his heart; yet this encouragement he has not vanity to ascribe even by implication, to the account of superior abilities; on the contrary, he is humble enough to confess a consciousness, that the rectitude of his intentions in the cause of virtue has been the principal basis of his success; and is satisfied that he owes his little reputation more to the uprightness of his design, than to the extent of his understanding; yet upon recollection, he is not sure but he betrays a greater share of self-sufficiency even in his humility, than if he had laid the most arrogant pretension to parts: the world however has its forms, and those forms should be constantly complied with, where they are neither ridiculous nor criminal; therefore, though a well-meaning mind may be reckoned among the first of all the human qualifications, still as it is a qualification which every body has it in his power to possess, a man cannot be said to raise himself insolently above his neighbours, when he claims no more than



than what he willingly allows to the meanest of them all.

The kindness of the Public having now put it into my power, to make a tolerable Selection from my various papers, and the marriage of my nephew, with whom I reside having considerably lessened the necessary time which should be devoted to the conduct of a Weekly Essay; I purpose taking leave of my readers in the present number, with an observation or two upon the nature of periodical publication, and an excuse for the evident disparity which must be constantly expected in productions of this kind.—The generality of writers when they undertake to amuse the world upon a plan of this nature, imagine, that because a paper or two may be struck off with a happy facility, a thousand may be composed with an equal degree of readiness; and never once doubt, while the world continues in good humour with these works, but what they will be able to go on with an unceasing variety of subjects, and an unabating fervor of inclination; the novelty of the undertaking, however is scarcely worn off, before the mind, with that lassitude which it feels in a constant application to all its other pursuits, flags under the weight of study and fatigue, and anxiously wishes to be disengaged; it sickens at the oppressive tax which it has thus laid upon its own enjoyments; and was it not for a secret fear that the discontinuance of its toil would be attributed not to an impatience of constraint, but to a want of abilities, many of our most celebrated Essayists would have soon relinquished their task, and consulted their convenience even before the instruction

struction of the world, and the establishment of their reputations.

There is scarcely a walk of literature, which is reckoned so easy, or which in fact is so difficult, as this species of periodical publication; in every other stile of composition, a writer may display his abilities on that particular subject with which he is most intimately acquainted; and may raise a considerable share of character by expatiating on such topics as are most immediately agreeable to his imagination; besides this, he may allow himself what time he thinks proper for the perfection of his works; and is never confined by a want of room from delivering himself fully upon the minutest point of speculation: but the case is far otherwise with the unfortunate Essayist: the miscellaneous nature of his undertaking, forces him to furnish a variety of subjects, and obliges him to enter upon numberless discussions, which require not only a general knowledge of the world, but are often repugnant to his inclination: nor do the inconveniencies under which he labours rest here; under an indispensable necessity of publishing on a particular day, whether he is either at leisure or in health; unembarrassed in his situation or undisturbed in his mind, he must go on, and even comprize his thoughts within such a compass as may suit the convenience of his Printer: before he can well begin, the scanty limits of his Paper renders it necessary to conclude; and his whole Essay must be contained in a quantity of words, which is scarcely sufficient to serve it for an introduction.

I do not mention these matters by any means to enhance the merit of my performance, but to apologize

apologize in reality for its faults ; a reader who does not consider how an Essayist is circumstanced, will often have opportunity to animadvert upon his productions with the greatest severity ; he will find many subjects handled with little knowledge, and others discussed with less force ; his good nature must therefore mitigate the harshness of his criticism, and he must never pronounce upon the work without considering the situation of the author. When I first began to make a Selection from the various papers which have appeared under the title of the BABLER, I was in reality astonished at the intolerable dullness of a number which I committed to the flames, and could not help admiring the goodness of the world, which for the sake of a few, I hope not altogether unworthy the regard of a good man, could patiently put up with such heaps of stupidity ; the more I considered the generosity of the Public, the more I was encouraged to go on with my Selection ; the same candour which I experienced, when I appeared periodically, I flattered myself would attend the publication of a volume or two ; especially when by weeding out the most insufferable papers, I had in some measure rendered myself less undeserving of the general protection : such of my readers therefore, as may not be ashamed to see me in their libraries, have now an opportunity of buying me in volumes. Yet greatly as I have been encouraged by the Public, the purchasers of

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will have occasion to be pleased at my declining to labour any longer in their service, as a gentleman



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tleman of *real* genius, is to fill up the column  
which I have enjoyed in that Paper, with an  
Essay entitled,

THE WISDOM OF THE WEEK;  
OR, A  
REGISTER OF PUBLIC ABSURDITIES:

in which, I doubt not, but they will find infinitely more entertainment; occasionally, I shall request the author to favour me with a place, for though my engagements will not allow me to write without intermission, I shall embrace every opportunity of assuring the Ladies and Gentlemen, who have hitherto honoured me with their protection, that I am,

with the greatest gratitude and respect,

their most devoted humble servant,

THE BABLER.

Printer ;—he accordingly brought me back the manuscript, and declared it could not possibly be inserted without undergoing some considerable amputations—It was in vain I argued with him on the importance of the subject, the spirit of the writing, and the credit it would certainly do his paper—the rogue was incorrigibly dull ; and told me if I would have it in, I must strike a pen through the *King*, cut out lord *Bute*, and burn the people of *England*.—These conditions were too hard to be complied with—and I rather chose to leave my admirable essay out entirely, than mangle it to the taste of an unfeeling blockhead, who appeared so glaringly callous to the beauties of a masterly production.

Circumscribed thus unhappily in my limits, the reader of judgment will not be surprised at finding many subjects thrown frequently into little histories, which otherwise situated, I should have attempted to discuss, on the methodical principles of a regular argument—As I had not room to enter into elaborate disquisitions, it was my business to give the reader a little entertainment ; and my duty at least to amuse his fancy, since I was unable to improve his understanding.

The principal matter which the author thinks himself under a necessity of apologizing for, is the similarity which the reader will find in some of the subjects ; this was a circumstance which, though the author was well aware it would expose him to the censure of the judicious, he could not conveniently avoid ; as it was impossible to deliver himself fully on some points in a single paper, he was under a necessity of resum-  
ing such as were most material to be discussed ;  
he

he flatters himself however, that he will not be thought extremely reprehensible on this account, since those who are satisfied with the mere superficials of a subject, may easily escape the repetitions, while those who expect any information by proceeding, may as easily pardon the prolixity. Upon the whole, there is nothing in the volumes now offered to the public, for which the author could not urge some palliation; but his excuses, perhaps, by trespassing on the readers patience, at a time they cannot correct the minutest error in his performance, will themselves stand in need of an apology; he will therefore only add, that tenderness in criticism is the next virtue to generosity; and that he shall scarcely feel a greater share of gratitude for those, who kindly discover any little merit in the following Essays; than for those who benevolently overlook their numerous imperfections.



C O N.



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# P R E F A C E.

**T**HERE is no subject in the world upon which an author speaks with a greater degree of latent pride, or a deeper air of outward humility, than his own productions.—He is perfectly sensible that they are trifles—yet he is bold enough to publish them—and while he seems to relinquish every title to the favourable opinion of the world, he returns his warmest thanks for past obligations, and indirectly tells us he has obtained it—thus the public are reduced to the agreeable alternative, either of acknowledging his merit, or reflecting upon their own judgment—and the consequence generally is, that through a fear of disparaging the credit of our taste, or perspicuity, we exalt him at once into a writer of consummate modesty, and uncommon abilities.

The author of the *BABLER*, however, wishes to steer between the extremes of an ostentatious parade, and an affected diffidence; he would by no means presumptuously place his pieces upon a forum with the essays of some cotemporaries, nor would he meanly sink them to the level of others—a first-rate reputation is no less beyond his hopes, than his deserts; yet if in the scale of honourable comparison, he rises with no capital degree of merit, he is satisfied that he cannot be the lowest in the ballance of contempt.—This declaration he is the more

emboldened to make, as during the course of his publication, he constantly had the honour of being re-printed by the greatest number of his literary fellow labourers in the vineyard of the public, and have been often happy enough to go through half a dozen editions, in half the number of days.

In the concluding number of these volumes the author has made some observations on the nature of essay writing in general, and rendered it incontestibly evident, that there is no walk of genius, which lies under so many difficulties; yet of all the various essayists the news-paper drudge is the most unfortunately circumstanced; small as the boundaries of a SPECTATOR, a RAMBLER, a WORLD, an ADVENTURER, or a CONNOISSEUR, may seem, the news-paper writer is under a necessity of moving in a still more contracted circle—the Printer (who on these occasions is a very great man) does not so much consider the importance of a writer's subject, as the immediate profit of the partners; it is not the improvement of the reader which he consults, but the interest of the paper, or the topic of the day, and therefore often stints the essayist in room, to advertise a parcel of stolen goods, or to epitomize the trial of some remarkable murderer.

I remember when the BABLER was first undertaken, I sent an essay to the press, on which I had employed extraordinary pains; and which I warmly imagined would have procured me at least a fortnight's reputation—the subject of the essay, was the absurdity of party distinctions; but unhappily, though I had endeavoured to contract myself within the most moderate limits, I had still exceeded the prudential bounds of the Printer;



